■ SPORTS / A22

Agojo cops WCC title, player of the year honors

■ BUSINESS / B1

Peso seen strengthening to 48 to $1

■ METRO / A17

DOJ throws out Suzette Wang's appeal to drop kidnap charges against her

■ WORLD / A20

Bush won't rule out Iran nuke strike

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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RP teaches Singapore how to handle protests

NGIII! EXPORT QUALITY!

By Luige A. del Puerto

WHO SAYS THE PHILIPPINES, the notorious laggard of Southeast Asia, does not have a thing or two to teach a wealthy neighbor like Singapore? The Philippines may

RP TEACHES/ A6

Oil prices continue to soar; Senate OKs 3 energy bills

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Philip C. Tubeza

AS WORLD CRUDE PRICES SOARED TO NEW record highs, the Senate moved closer to approving a measure mandating the use of locally produced fuel in the transport sector.

Three Senate committees—energy, agriculture and food, and finance—approved Senate Bill No.

OIL PRICES/ A6

Old foes attend Erap birthday; bishop apologizes

By Volt Contreras and DJ Yap

HISTORY HAS A WAY OF BEstowing birthday gifts.

It has given ousted President Joseph Estrada something priceless: an undiminished charisma to work the crowds and the clout to win back adversaries and make loyal friends across political borders.

Estrada marked his 69th birthday yesterday with a Mass and breakfast buffet in a church not far from the courthouse hearing his plunder trial that theoretically could earn him the death penalty by lethal injection.

Several thousand supporters packed the church. There were former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, the Philippine President's half-sister Cielo Macapagal-Salgado and outspoken Bishop Antonio Tobias who stunned the audience with his homily.

"I hope you can forgive the Catholic Church for what happened to you," said Tobias, obviously referring to the major role the late Cardinal Jaime L. Sin played in the 2001 People Power revolt that drove Estrada from Malacañang.

"In the name of Jesus, walk and move, Mr. President, for the sake of our country," said Tobias.

Guingona, then a senator, was a key figure in the events leading to the impeachment trial and the ouster of Estrada. But during Mass at the St. Peter's Parish on Commonwealth Avenue, he shared the front pew with the ex-President and some members of

OLD FOES/ A6

CATHOLIC priests pray over ex-President Joseph Estrada during Mass to celebrate his 69th birthday at the St. Peter's Church in Quezon City Wednesday.

RAFFY LERMA

Erap admits Chavit gave ₱1M to son

By Volt Contreras and Nelson Flores

OUSTED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada testified yesterday a son out of wedlock received a P1.2-million check from Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson as a birthday gift and denied it was meant to buy a P13-million necklace for his mistress.

In his fourth appearance for his defense in his plunder trial, Estrada and his examining counsel Jose Flaminiano did not touch on the check's source of funding.

It was brought up mainly to belie Singson's earlier statements on how the check—now a

ERAP/ A6

Drugs seen in Saudi slays

Turf war over shabu, lottery, says Jeddah source

By Volt Contreras

A TURF WAR IN THE ILlegal drug trade?

Members of the Filipino community in Jeddah are increasingly drawn to this conclusion following the mysterious disappearance of six of their compatriots and the discovery of body parts in the city two weeks ago, a source from Saudi Arabia told the INQUIRER yesterday.

A community leader, who declined to be named for his safety, also revealed that contrary to earlier Philippine consulate reports, not just 10 but "over a 100 Filipinos" had been held for questioning by Saudi police concerning the chopped-up bodies.

The "drug angle" emerged as one of the six missing persons included a woman known in Filipino circles there as "Madam S, who has a reputation for peddling drugs (*shabu* or methamphetamine hydrochloride)," the source said.

"The buzz over here is that what sparked the killing was the drug

DRUGS/ A4

LYNN RILLON

PRESIDENT ARROYO, surrounded by military top brass, relaxes at the pool of new housing units for soldiers in Fort Bonifacio Wednesday. She is flanked by Vice President Noli de Castro (right) and former AFP Chief of Staff Efren Abu and AFP Chief of Staff Generoso Senga.

SC rules unified ID system legal

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE UNIFIED, MULTIPURpose identification card system being pushed by President Macapagal-Arroyo is constitutional and does not violate the right to privacy, the Supreme Court ruled yesterday.

The vote was 12-2, with Associate Justices Adolph Azcuña and Consuelo Ynares-Santiago voting against Executive Order No. 420.

The 24-page ruling, written by Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, said the EO that Ms Arroyo issued on April 13 last year was not even "all-encompassing" because it was not compelling citizens to acquire the unified ID.

"It is not a national ID system," lawyer Ismael Khan, spokesperson of the high court, told reporters.

Said the tribunal: "The right to privacy does not bar the adoption of reasonable ID

SC RULES/ A4

GMA certifies as urgent bill on abolition of death penalty

By Christine O. Avendaño and Christian V. Esguerra

FOLLOWING UP ON HER COMmutation of death sentences, President Macapagal-Arroyo certified as urgent on Tuesday night a bill in Congress seeking to abolish the 12-year-old Death Penalty Law (Republic Act No. 7659).

But yesterday the President suggested that the law had a dim chance of being abolished.

"I expect problems," she said in a chance interview with reporters at the Palace grounds, where she attended a birthday *merienda* for Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

Ms Arroyo was asked whether she expected the Senate, which had been at loggerheads with her since the political crisis began last year, to cooperate in approving the abolition of RA 7659.

She said she had already certified as urgent the House committee report recommending the abolition of the law, and lamented the purported tendency of the Senate to "always investigate rather than legislate."

"That's why we have to change the system of government," she added, taking the opportunity to again make a pitch for the amendment of the 1987 Constitution in order to switch to the parliamentary system.

At the *merienda*, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita signed two letters, one addressed to Speaker Jose de Venecia and the other to Senate President Franklin Drilon, transmitting Ms

GMA CERTIFIES/ A4

Mother of 2 women raped and killed vows to fight on

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—THE MOTHER OF two young women who were raped and killed in 1997 is back in the battle.

After expressing on Tuesday an uncharacteristic acceptance of President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to commute death sentences to life terms, Thelma Chiong yesterday said she would fight it all the way.

She wrote a letter assailing the President for commuting the sentence of death row inmates, including five of the seven men convicted of the rape-murder of

MOTHER/ A4

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US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenny addresses the American Chamber of Commerce in a Makati hotel Wednesday.

AP

Frustrated prosecutor quits Subic rape case

Gonzalez: If he is openly disagreeing with me, he is free to resign

OLONGAPO CITY PROSECUTOR Prudencio Jalandoni said yesterday he would quit a rape case against four US Marines, frustrated over Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's decision to reduce the charges against three of the defendants.

Jalandoni told the Associated Press he felt he would be ineffective as a member of the prosecution panel because he would keep on "worrying about whether [I] may be inconsistent with the position of the secretary."

Gonzalez's curt reply was: "If he is openly disagreeing with me, he is free to resign ... Ultimately, it will be the court that will decide this anyway." *(See related story on Page A2.)*

Gonzalez said Tuesday he found no conspiracy surrounding the alleged rape of a 22-year-old Filipino woman on Nov. 1 and decided to keep only one Marine as the principal defendant, who could face life imprisonment and the three others as accessories, who could face up to 12 years in prison.

"With that kind of development, your initiative and momentum will be stunted. You become frustrated and disappointed," Jalandoni said.

"I was thinking, what if she was a relative, or my wife, or my daughter, does it mean that we cannot go after them? And it can happen to anybody. Just because they are Americans, they are above the law?" he said.

Jalandoni also said he had a "heavy workload" of other cases.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye backed Gonzalez, saying the Department of Justice did its job "objectively and impartially."

"This is not a political issue affecting our relations with the United States as both countries are one in the search for truth and justice," said Bunye. "Let us keep our emotions at bay and allow the light of reason and fact to unravel the truth."

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney told reporters the Americans would comply with all laws that

FRUSTRATED/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers. Eastern and Southern Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/19/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONTPAGE

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'Cheering no proof of rape conspiracy'

By Armand N. Nocum

THE ACTION OF THREE UNITED STATES SERVICEMEN IN ALlegedly "cheering on" colleague Daniel Smith as he allegedly raped a 22-year-old Filipina in Subic last year does not make them "coconspirators" in the crime of rape.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said this as he defended his decision to modify the charges against US Marines Keith Silkwood, Dominic Duplantis and Chad Carpentier from "principal to accessories" in the crime of rape.

"The mere fact that the respondents were laughing is not proof of conspiracy," Gonzalez said in a 20-page resolution of the petition for review filed by Silkwood, Duplantis and Carpentier.

The three allegedly encouraged Smith to rape the woman in a Starex van in November 2005 by shouting: "Go! Smith! Go!"

According to the Gonzalez resolution, the victim, in her sworn affidavit dated Nov. 2, 2005, claimed that while Smith was allegedly raping her, the three US Marines were laughing and egging him on.

Gonzalez said that the victim's statement "*Ang mga kasama niya ay tuwang tuwa*" (his companions were very happy), was not enough to prove that the three had "conspired and agreed to a common desire to commit the crime of rape."

"Conspiracy exists when two or more persons come to an agreement concerning the commission of a crime and decided to commit it," he wrote.

Gonzalez said the facts and circumstances of the case showed that the complainant "miserably failed to produce evidence that will measure up to the quantum evidence necessary to establish a prima facie case" or probable cause against Silkwood, Duplantis and Carpentier.

But the three certainly knew "what was going on in the back seat of the van" but did not do anything about it, so they should be charged as accessories, he said.

Gonzalez also said there could not have been a gang rape as alleged because "the physical condition of the van will not allow a conclusion of gang rape."

The justice secretary said he would order justice prosecutors to file a motion to withdraw the previous charge and file a new one indicting Smith as principal, while downgrading the charges against Silkwood, Duplantis and Carpentier.

Smith remained a principal accused not only because of the strong evidence against him but because he did not file a counter-affidavit to refute the charges, Gonzalez said.

The Gabriela women's group said Gonzalez's downgrading of the charges against the three US servicemen was tantamount to acquitting them.

"Most probably, it is a prelude to other maneuvers in the case that will eventually lead to the absolution of the suspects," said Gabriela deputy secretary general Lana Linaban in a statement.

Party-list Rep. Liza Maza, who represents the group in Congress, accused Gonzalez of deliberately weakening the Subic rape case so that all four accused would be exonerated in the end.

"The downgrading of the charges is an outrage and reeks of a sell-out. This weakens the case and jeopardizes the victim's quest for justice," said Maza. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora*

INVESTIGATING NUR

Former Muslim Mindanao governor and Moro National Liberation Front leader Nur Misuari waves to followers at the Department of Justice where he submitted his manifestation in relation to the reinvestigation of the rebellion charges against him and seven co-accused. On Misuari's motion, the Makati regional trial court had remanded the rebellion case to the DOJ after suspending court proceedings.

2 drug fugitives fall, doomed men no more

By Luige A. del Puerto

TWO OF THE COUNTRY'S MOSTwanted drug traffickers were re-arrested two days ago, but luckily for the Chinese duo, they were among the 1,205 convicts whose death sentences President Macapagal-Arroyo had commuted—even before either of them had been inside a maximum security prison.

Police said Ronald Yao and Chua Lin Yen were sentenced to death in absentia by a Pasig City court in September 2005 after they jumped bail earlier on during their trial.

The two carried bounties of P300,000 each and were on the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency's list of most-wanted drug manufacturers and traffickers.

They were nabbed last Tuesday near a mall on Edsa after a month-long surveillance, according to the PNP's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

"However, with the latest move by the President to commute sentences to life imprisonment, their penalties have been correspondingly reduced," one police officer said.

Asked how the police feel about the commutation of the two convicts' sentence, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao said: "This (commutation of death sentences) is a national policy which the police force will have to obey or follow, and our job is just to implement whatever decisions from our national leadership are handed down to us."

The escape of the two convicted drug traffickers raised questions about the ability of the Bureau of Immigration and the Land Transportation Office to spot escaped convicted aliens and prevent their departure from the country.

Police said they had information that Yao left the Philippines in March and had just returned last Saturday.

"Our investigators are now checking with the Bureau of Immigration how this guy managed to leave the country despite the fact that he is on the most-wanted list of PDEA," said Chief Supt. Pedro Tango, deputy director of the CIDG.

When arrested, Yao carried a driver's license and a postal ID bearing the name "Noel Chua." Yen had a driver's license with the name "Danilo Chua."

The duo, together with another Chinese, Wen Jin Cai alias "Rodel Uy," were first arrested in Makati on Nov. 6, 2001, the same day that police raided a drug laboratory in Pasig City.

Investigators believed they were involved in running the clandestine laboratory.

Cop chief sacked after NPA raid

SOME 50 NEW PEOple's army guerrillas raided the police station of a remote town in Isabela on Tuesday afternoon, disarming the officers on duty and making off with six assault rifles and three shotguns.

As in a number of previous cases, Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao immediately relieved the police chief of Dinapigue town along with the provincial commander and ordered the town's 10-member police force to undergo training.

Lomibao said the rebel attack showed a "lapse in discipline" among the local police force, which is to be replaced temporarily by the Isabela Provincial Mobile Group.

Relieved were Isabela police director Senior Supt. Percival Barba and Dinapigue police chief Elpidio Solis.

"This is in line with my policy that in case a police station was attacked and the policemen did not fight it out, we'd relieve administratively the police provincial director as well as the entire police station," Lomibao said. "We shall retrain them so this will not happen again."

Reports from the area said the rebels arrived aboard two commandeered logging trucks around 3 p.m. and took the detachment by surprise, stripping the officers on duty not only of their arms but their cell phones and money as well. The rebels then fled toward Aurora province aboard two motorized outrigger boats. *Luige A. del Puerto with reports from AFP, AP*

RP consul visits Mancao in Miami

By Jerome Aning

THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INvestigation has allowed a Philippine diplomat to visit detained former police superintendent Cesar Mancao II in Miami, Florida, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

Philippine Ambassador to the US Albert del Rosario reported to DFA that Angelo Macatangay Jr., Philippine honorary consul general in Miami, was allowed to see Mancao in the local office of the FBI as "a special accommodation."

Del Rosario said the FBI told Mancao and his lawyer that Mancao was needed as "a material witness" in New Jersey, where an espionage case against Michael Ray Aquino is in progress.

Macatangay "observed that Mancao was obviously concerned and tired but composed and in good health," Del Rosario said.

According to Del Rosario, Macatangay received a call last April 14 from Mancao, who informed the consul that he voluntarily turned himself to FBI officials in Miami the day before after learning that he was being sought by FBI agents at his home in connection with Aquino's case, which is related to the White House espionage suit filed against former FBI intelligence analyst Leandro Aragoncillo.

The consul immediately proceeded to the FBI office to meet Mancao who, according to his lawyer, would be taken to the Federal Detention Center in Miami after FBI authorities complete their procedure.

The lawyer said Mancao had intended to file for bail the next day with the Federal Magistrate.

However, after learning that the US Attorney General's office was sending an officer to Florida this week to see Mancao, the lawyer said they suspended their efforts to get him out on bail.

Meanwhile, the DFA said another consul general, Cecilia Rebong in New York, would be monitoring Mancao's case should the latter be flown to New Jersey.

Aquino and Aragoncillo were arrested by FBI agents in September for allegedly gathering and transmitting confidential information about President Macapagal-Arroyo in FBI files to several opposition leaders.

Both Mancao and Aquino fled the country before Philippine government investigators could include them in formal charges for the murder of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in November 2000.

Mayuga as AFP chief possible – Ermita

AFTER COMING OUT WITH A REPORT EXonerating top generals from complicity in alleged election cheating, Navy Chief Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga is reportedly among those being considered by President Macapagal-Arroyo to head the Armed Forces after Chief of Staff Generoso Senga retires in July.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita would not confirm or deny that Mayuga was in the short list but hinted that his succeeding Senga was not an impossibility.

"The Constitution says that the President of the Philippines can choose from among senior colonels and any of the general and admirals of the Armed Forces in the active service. Therefore, it follows that senior colonels and all the generals and admirals have the qualification to be chosen for the post of chief of staff," Ermita told a press briefing.

He said speculation might well be that Mayuga's being chair of the fact-finding board that investigated the poll cheating scandal would be a consideration.

With the military still suffering cracks in its organization because of the adventurism of some officers, Ermita said loyalty would be the President's main consideration.

But he said it was too early to speculate on the race for the military's plum post and no names had yet been submitted for the President's consideration. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

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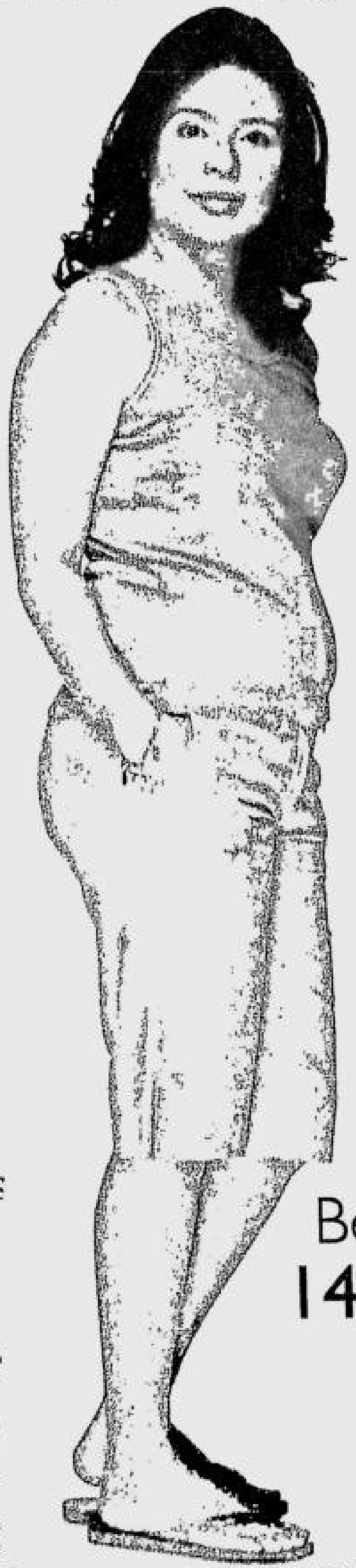

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Drugs seen in Saudi slays

From page A1

angle. *Nasagasaan ng isa ang kalaban* (A member of the group encroached on the rival's territory)," the source, a private citizen who has contacts in the consulate, said in a phone interview.

"Looks like there has been a turf war. Somebody engaged in *shabu* (drugs) and also in (illegal) lottery encroached upon the business interest of a different group," the informant added.

In Manila, President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to keep in close touch with Saudi authorities and ensure full transparency in the investigation of the missing Filipinos.

"The Filipino public must be fully informed of developments. This is a highly unfortunate incident involving a heinous offense and we have faith and confidence in the Saudi police's capacity to conduct a fair and impartial investigation," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

The source provided more details on the identity of the missing Filipinos, information so far withheld by the consulate and the DFA.

Butcher

Among them, he said, was a certain Dante Rivero who works as a butcher in Sarawat, a supermarket in the Jeddah International Market complex and which employs Filipinos.

Rivero is also known among his compatriots as "a basketball player by night" for he is considerably tall.

Three of the missing belong to a single family, all also employed by Sarawat. Two of them are a couple, while the third is a relative.

This family, the source said, was known to run an investment racket known as a "Sawa Scam."

"Madam S" belonged to this family, who only use the alleged scam "as a front to raise money for drugs."

Saturation drive

"It was not yet clear if the remaining two who are missing also work in Sarawat. Reports reaching the consulate said six are missing, but not necessarily dead," the source added.

Among those "picked up" by police for questioning were Filipino businessmen. "*Parang nag-sona ang mga pulis* (It was as though the cops were conducting a saturation drive)."

Like Greenbelt

Many of the arrests were made at the Jeddah International Market (JIM), a favorite hangout among Filipinos as the place is similar to Makati's Greenbelt, he said.

Hours before the INQUIRER interview, he said he had passed by the JIM and found "no more Pinoys" in the area.

The source confirmed an INQUIRER report on Wednesday, which quoted a DFA official as saying that a set of recovered body parts had already been pieced together. The Arabic daily Okaz even carried a photo of that "assembled body," he said.

The Philippine foreign and labor departments are still at a loss regarding the circumstances of the arrest and pieces of evidence the Saudi authorities have in tagging the Filipinos.

DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said yesterday that the Filipinos were still regarded as suspects but they could be held incommunicado for up to 60 days.

Access to lawyers

"The Saudi police guaranteed our consul that the Filipinos are in good condition in the place where they are detained and that their rights would be respected," Asuque said.

The detained Filipinos have no access to lawyers or even Philippine consular officials.

All the Philippine consulate in Jeddah could do at the moment was to wait for the investigation to be completed and the restrictions on visits lifted.

"We need to follow the process of the law in Saudi Arabia but it's important that we can respond immediately when we are allowed access," he said.

The Philippine Embassy in the Middle Eastern kingdom would also hire a Shari'ah lawyer if ever a case was filed in court against the Filipinos. *With reports from Jerome Aning and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

GMA certifies as urgent bill on abolition of death penalty

From page A1

Arroyo's letter "certifying to the necessity of the immediate enactment of House Bill No. 4826."

But Ermita was confident that the bill would pass Congress, saying he expected "bipartisan support" for the abolition of the Death Penalty Law.

"I don't think it will be a controversy," he told reporters, saying that the issue drew questions only because anything that the President did was being subjected to intrigue.

He said these included reports that Ms Arroyo decided on the new policy of commutation in order to "win over" the sentiments of Catholic bishops.

Ermita reiterated that the commutation would benefit some 80 death convicts whose sentence had been affirmed by the Supreme Court.

Republic Act 7659 took effect in 1994. The first to be executed was rape convict Leo Echegaray, in January 1999.

Bishops being courted

But Novaliches Bishop Antonio Tobias called on his fellow prelates to be wary of the real motive behind the President's decision to commute all death sentences.

"One way of looking at it is that the bishops are being courted," Tobias said at a press conference.

"I hope bishops will be more careful," he said.

The outspoken prelate said he was aware that Ms Arroyo's decision came shortly after the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines issued a pastoral statement assailing the Malacañang-backed effort to amend the Constitution.

The CBCP had expressed alarm, saying the proposed changes were wanting in "moral justification" and were "dangerously unclear and open to manipulation by groups with self-serving interests."

Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen said there was no way the CBCP would be swayed from its position on Charter change just because the President had granted what the Catholic Church had long been seeking—a stay on all executions, and eventually, the abolition of the Death Penalty Law.

"No, I don't think so. The CBCP is set on that," Labayen said at the press conference.

Contradiction

Asked if he thought the President was sincere considering the timing of her decision, Tobias said: "Time will unmask the truth."

"In this world, good and bad are so well-entrenched that it's difficult to separate them," he said, pointing out that despite the commutation, "civil liberties are being curtailed."

"There is a contradiction; there is no consistency," he said.

But at the Palace, Ermita dismissed Tobias' call on other bishops to be wary of Ms Arroyo's new policy.

"The President has been consistent since Day One," he said, adding that Ms Arroyo had granted reprieves to 104 death convicts since March.

Tobias and Labayen are gearing for another prayer rally scheduled at 1 p.m. on Friday to demand Ms Arroyo's resignation and condemn Charter change.

The prelates, along with Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, are apparently risking getting hosed down again, as what happened last year when they marched from Plaza Miranda to Mendiola.

They will follow the same route in leading the Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya (KME) which hopes to gather around 5,000 participants.

"The people cannot and will not forget that the real issues hounding Ms Arroyo's administration are legitimacy and poor governance," said KME spokesperson Jaime Regalario.

"We are against the continued governance of [Ms Arroyo] who, by clear evidence, has been shown to be an illegitimate President with no mandate to govern at all," said the KME statement read by Bishop Labayen.

Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao warned crime victims offended by Ms Arroyo's announced commutation not to resort to vigilantism.

'Wild, wild West'

"I'd like to caution those who would like to apply so-called 'judicial shortcuts' not to resort to that because we would not like things to go the 'wild, wild West' way," Lomibao said.

"We have our criminal justice system. Therefore, they should also observe the rule of law," he said.

He stressed, however, that his warning was unsolicited by Malacañang.

Earlier, crime victims and their relatives said they would deal with Ms Arroyo's move by resorting to the revenge principle of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

But Lomibao pointed out that crime was "not solved by committing another crime."

"Such judicial shortcuts will only lead us back to the discarded 'wild, wild West' days where justice comes from the barrel of the gun, often weighing heavily against the weak," he said in a statement.

He added that the PNP would not be deterred from going after criminals, even with the prospect of their death sentences being reduced to life terms.

According to police, there is no sufficient basis to prove that the death penalty is a deterrent to crime.

Director Vidal Querol even pointed out that in 2004, even when no executions took place that year, kidnap-for-ransom cases numbered 29—the lowest in a decade.

He said this showed that the death penalty was not necessarily needed to stop crime. *With a report from Luige A. del Puerto*

Mother of 2 women raped and killed vows to fight on

From page A1

her daughters Jacqueline and Marijoy.

In an emotional radio interview conducted after she sent the letter to Ms Arroyo, Chiong said she initially took the news of the commutation calmly because it was Holy Week.

But when the thought sank in that her daughters' "rapists and murderers" might be set free, she said, she got very angry and hurt.

"I now realize why our country's justice system is called the criminal justice system. That's because justice [here] is only for the criminals … We are a criminal-friendly country," she said.

In the letter, Chiong said her "two lovely daughters were kidnapped, handicapped with masking tape around their faces, raped and thrown [into] a 150-meter ravine."

"And Jacqueline has yet to be found until now," she wrote.

She also wrote that while suffering the trauma of loss, her family went through the process of seeking justice despite limited financial resources.

"Madame President, what would I say to my children and to the members of the Crusade Against Violence and the [other] victims of crime?" Chiong wrote.

"Is this what you call justice? Because we have a law that calls for the death penalty [for heinous crimes], you should be the best example to implement the law. Do you think that commuting the sentence of those affirmed by the Supreme Court as death convicts will be in [everyone's] best interest? Why should we please those who have been sentenced to death?" she wrote.

Chiong said that although she sent the letter by overnight courier, she planned to present a copy to Ms Arroyo when the latter visits Cebu for the Battle of Mactan celebration on April 27.

On Tuesday, Chiong said she could accept the commutation provided the convicts would not be granted pardon or parole.

But yesterday, she said she could not contain her rage when she learned how the President had been congratulated for her move.

Ms Arroyo's announcement has been welcomed by the Catholic bishops and by the government of Spain, of which one of the seven convicts of the rape-murder, Francisco "Paco" Larrañaga, is a citizen.

Larrañaga carries dual citizenship because his father, Manuel Francisco Larrañaga, is a Spanish citizen. His mother is Margarita Osmeña Gonzalez, granddaughter of former President Sergio Osmeña Sr.

Paco and his family have insisted on his innocence, saying they had witnesses attesting that he was in Quezon City when the Chiong sisters were abducted in Cebu City on July 16, 1997.

The Larrañagas had sought and received support from the Spanish government and from the European Union in the course of appealing for a review of Paco's sentence.

In the interview, Chiong said the Catholic Church had taken the side of the convicts.

"There are so many victims of crime who cry during Christmas. Did these priests and nuns ever think of us? The government has taken us for granted, and now it will commute the sentence of those who victimized our daughters? Where can we find justice? Who will stand up for us?" Chiong said, weeping.

Asked to comment, Msgr. Achilles Dakay, media liaison officer of the Archdiocese of Cebu, said Chiong had sought help from and was assisted by Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal during the rape-murder trial.

Dakay denied that the Church had neglected Chiong. He said the Church had welcomed the announced commutation in line with its prolife position.

SC rules unified ID system legal

From page A1

systems by government entities. Some 100 countries have compulsory national ID systems…"

It said it was convinced of the legitimacy of EO 420 because the document did not also compel the judiciary and other constitutional bodies like the Commission on Elections to use the unified ID.

"[The document] does not establish a national ID system because legislation is needed to establish a single ID system that is compulsory for all branches of government," it added.

No infirmity

According to Khan, the proposed unified ID only contains information that is already present in IDs issued by government agencies.

In fact, the Supreme Court requires more information from its employees than the 14 specific data that make up the unified ID card proposed by Ms Arroyo, the tribunal said in the ruling.

It added: "The Court is even trying to unify its ID system with those of the … Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan and Court of Tax Appeals.

"On its face, EO 420 shows no constitutional infirmity because it even narrowly limits the data that can be collected, recorded and shown, compared to the existing ID systems of government entities.

"EO 420 further provides strict safeguards to protect the confidentiality of the data collected, in contrast to the prior ID systems, which are bereft of strict administrative safeguards."

'Surprising' ruling

The ruling drew immediate reactions from the militant groups that challenged EO 420 in court.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno and the Bayan Muna party-list group argued in their petition last year that EO 420 "blatantly ignored" the high court's 1998 ruling, which rejected a similar national computer reference ID system that was proposed by former President Fidel Ramos.

Neri Colmenares, lawyer of the two groups, said the ruling "surprised us" because its promulgation reinforced a government crackdown on Ms Arroyo's critics.

According to Colmenares, the technology on which a unified nationwide data banking system will rely on has not even reached a level where it can secure information.

This databank will house information provided by agencies, which will issue the unified ID cards.

Colmenares said most of the justices missed the fact that a unified data collection system "will grow every time a citizen transacts."

"It is the abuse of this additional information that we fear," he said. "But it is really the timing [of its release] that concerns us now."

The tribunal's ruling grants Ms Arroyo new access to information that will render the whole opposition vulnerable, Colmenares said.

Charged with rebellion

A number of the petitioners have had their movements circumscribed.

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran, former KMU chair, is detained on a rebellion charge.

Other petitioners, such as Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador, have sought the sanctuary of the House along with Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano and Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza while they challenge a similar rebellion charge.

At its infancy

These charges surfaced right after the President declared a weeklong state of emergency in February as a result of a purported Left-Right plot to oust her.

In her dissenting opinion, Ynares-Santiago said that "other than the motherhood assurances of confidentiality, or that the data stored [by government in a unified ID system] will be used solely for establishing the identity of a person, or the proscription against violation of the right to privacy, there are no clear, specific and categorical guarantees that would dispel trepidations and suspicions of mistreatment and abuse."

"Philippine jurisprudence on the right to privacy, not to mention informational privacy, is at its infancy. There are very few occasions that Philippine courts are given the opportunity to resolve and expound on issues relating to the right to privacy as a constitutional guarantee," she said.

Ynares-Santiago said the high court's initial ruling on the Ramos-proposed national ID system was notable for recognizing this right.

"The basic attribute of an effective right to informational privacy is the individual's ability to control the flow of information … describing him … To deprive an individual of his power to control or determine [with] whom to share information of his personal details would deny him of his right to his own personhood," she said.

Chilling prospect

Like Colmenares, Ynares-Santiago doubted the technology that would be used to store unified data.

"Aside from the chilling prospect that one's profile is being formed from the gathering of data from various sources, there is also the unsettling thought that these data may be inaccurate, outdated or, worse, misused," she said.

She added: "EO 420 failed to provide the yardstick on how to handle the subsequent and additional data that will be accumulated when the ID is used for future governmental and private transactions."

Frustrated prosecutor quits Subic rape case

From page A1

apply to the rape case.

No proof of conspiracy

"We want to see justice served in an impartial manner," she said.

Gonzalez said Tuesday there was no proof supporting the earlier conspiracy indictment in which "the act of one is the act of all."

Gonzalez said Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith remained the principal defendant and his former alleged co-conspirators—Lance Cpl. Keith Silkwood, Lance Cpl. Dominic Duplantis and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier—would be charged as accessories.

They belong to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Force stationed in Okinawa, Japan, and had finished counterterrorism maneuvers with Filipino troops when the alleged rape occurred on Nov. 1 inside a van at the Subic Bay Freeport.

Lawyering for accused?

Gonzalez said the Filipino driver, earlier excluded from the case by a judge, should be charged as an accomplice.

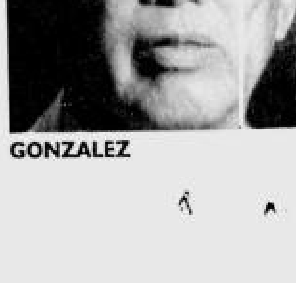
Evalyn Ursua, the woman's lawyer, said Gonzalez's decision indicated that "he is lawyering for the accused."

She said she would ask the court or Arroyo to overturn it.

"How did it happen that they became accessories when they were present during the commission of the crime?" Ursua said. "We will not take this sitting down."

AP

JALANDONI



GONZALEZ

Key Christian bloc hops on to Cha-cha train

By Christian V. Esguerra

A KEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH BLOC has mobilized its members to add steam to the controversial people's initiative purportedly being spearheaded by Malacañang to pave the way for a parliamentary form of government.

The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) has begun conducting dialogues in different communities nationwide to prepare the public in time for a plebiscite, according to its national chair, Bishop Efraim Tendero.

Tendero and some 20,000 churches belonging to the PCEC were not bothered by allegations that Malacañang was using the issue of Charter change to divert attention from the unresolved political crisis.

"We don't share that perspective. We see the people's initiative as a valid expression of the people," he told the INQUIRER.

Tendero and the PCEC are known allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo among Christian denominations, which also include the Jesus Is Lord Movement led by her staunch critic, Bro. Eddie Villanueva.

Tendero, appointed to the Malacañang-initiated Consultative Commission last year, said his group had been supportive of Charter change as early as 1996 and felt that the move remained timely and a necessity today.

In the ongoing education campaign, the bishop said the PCEC was focused on three main amendments-shift to a parliamentary form of government, strengthening of the autonomy of local governments, and relaxing of the citizenship requirement for business operations in the country.

But Tendero made clear that the PCEC would oppose any effort to cancel elections next year, a position he also took during deliberations at the Consultative Commission.

The PCEC's support behind Charter change contradicts the position of other denominations such as the protestant National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

The NCCP earlier said changing the 1987 Constitution was not appropriate at this time and lacked any "moral justification."

"The suggested changes by those who are pushing the campaign seem to overturn what meager democratic rights and civil liberties that are now enshrined in the Constitution," it said.

"Done at a time when the grim specter of a more authoritarian rule seems to loom in the horizon, we cannot allow Charter change to see fruition."

In Metro Manila, volunteers of the pro-Cha-cha Sigaw ng Bayan led by transport leader and the coalition secretary general Efren de Luna said they would stage today a "Cha-Cha train" advocacy motorcade across Metro Manila to further raise awareness and boost acceptance-of constitutional reforms among the city folk.

A follow-up of the Sigaw ng Bayan motorcade held in Makati, Manila, Mandaluyong and San Juan before the Holy Week, today's Cha-Cha "express" will cover Manila, Caloocan and Quezon City, De Luna said in a press statement.

Lawyer Raul Lambino said scores of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) posted statements of support on the Sigaw ng Bayan website as the Charter Change Advocacy Commission (AdCom) kicked off here Wednesday a three-day Mindanao "offensive" to boost popular support for the people's initiative spearheaded by the coalition.

Flight delays seen with runway closure

CEBU PACIFIC AIRWAYS YESTERDAY advised its passengers to expect delays in its domestic and international service due to the closure of runway 13/31 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport for renovation starting April 17. This leaves only Runway 06 to service all flights.

In a press statement, Cebu Pacific said runway 13/31 will be upgraded to handle bigger and heavier aircraft that are expected once the Naia Terminal 3 starts operations. The renovation is expected to be completed by July 17.

The airline said it was discussing with airport officials ways to ease the delays.

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Old foes attend Erap birthday; bishop apologizes

From page A1

his family.

Guingona's "I accuse" speech elevated the corruption charges against Estrada from the streets to the legislature. But after a falling-out with Ms Arroyo, whom he served as her appointed Vice President, he crossed the political fence and backed the Estrada-led opposition bloc in the 2004 elections.

We were good friends

"Erap and I were good friends since our school days in San Juan. His brother Paul and I were classmates in elementary," Guingona later told the INQUIRER. "His mother and my mother were also close friends."

"We just became principled adversaries in 2000," he said, when reminded of his "I accuse" speech.

That piece, he said, "was based on the circumstances and the evidence against him at the time. And now he's defending himself."

"The strongest of steel comes from the fiercest of fires. Erap went through the fiercest of fires and today we have a new view of Erap and he has a new view of the world. He has new values, a new faith in God, and so we continue to be friends as we were in yesteryears," he added.

The low-key Salgado said she was not there because she was nursing a feud with the President, her husband Mike Arroyo and their daughter Luli.

FORMER President Erap Estrada reaches out to shake hands with Cielo Macapagal Salgado, President Macapagal-Arroyo's half-sister, at the St. Peter's Church in Quezon City, Wednesday. EDWIN BACASMAS

Sister loves her country more

"It just happens that I love my country more than my sister," said Salgado, former vice governor of Pampanga.

Yesterday's celebration was the fifth—and evidently most public—birthday bash thrown by the Estrada camp since he was arrested on April 25, 2001. The previous parties were held just within his detention area, initially at the Quezon Memorial Medical Center and later at his Tanay, Rizal, resthouse.

In remarks delivered in Filipino after he received communion, Estrada said his birthday wish was "to have my name cleared."

For his supporters, he said. "I wish our people to be free—from poverty and want, fear and repression—and to be unconditionally free to seek justice and truth."

Alluding to his five-year detention, he said he had since learned "to embrace suffering not as a punishment but as a blessing. Indeed, this is the most precious gift from the Holy Spirit."

10 priests bless Erap

Up to 10 priests who concelebrated the Mass gave their blessing to the actor-turned-politician who had been open about his drinking, gambling and siring of children out of wedlock.

After assuring his supporters that "the Risen Lord in His infinite mercy will help us overcome this Calvary," Estrada and the VIP guests proceeded after the Mass to the church's basement hall, where around 20 tables arrayed for fine dining awaited them.

Supporters turned the normally staid church of St. Peter's into a fiesta complete with fireworks, orange and white balloons, a brass band, Ati-atihan dancers and fire-eaters.

The buffet table offered fried rice, pork tocino, shredded *tuyo* (dried fish), scrambled egg, lomi soup, rice cakes, *pandesal* stuffed with coco jam, fruits and rice cakes.

Estrada spent just around 30 minutes at the breakfast reception before being escorted by police and Sandiganbayan sheriffs to his scheduled plunder hearing. A planned "breaking of the bread" with his political leaders from the urban poor just outside the church did not push through.

Late court date

Estrada and company made it to the courtroom an hour late for the 9:30 a.m. hearing. But as expected, the birthday-partying mood seemed to have prevailed and his "apology" was accepted by the magistrates.

The justices and the chief public prosecutor said their greetings, and a smiling Estrada nodded back. Nearing lunch break, prosecution did not object to the defense panel's motion to have the afternoon session canceled because the accused, the court was told, had so many well-wishers to attend to for the rest of the day. *With a report from Fe Zamora*

'Twas also Ka Roger's birthday

AND THERE WERE THOSE other birthday celebrants yesterday.

President Macapagal Arroyo joined a feast of sweet corn, *halo-halo* and *pancit malabon* to mark the 61st birthday of Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye at the Palace grounds. She said her wish was for Bunye to be happy and healthy.

It was also New People's Army spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal's 58th birthday. Told about it, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita greeted Rosal and chuckled as he urged him to join the government side. *Christine O. Avendaño*

Erap admits Chavit gave ...

From page A1

piece of evidence for the prosecution—came about and changed hands.

Contrary to Singson's earlier testimony in the 5-year-old trial, Estrada said the check was not part of the funds raised by close friends in 1999 to buy the necklace as birthday gift for one of the ex-President's mistresses, former starlet Laarni Enriquez.

Instead, Estrada said, Singson gave the check as a gift to one of his children with Enriquez, Jake, who is Singson's godson. Jake received P1 million while his two other siblings got P100,000 each, Estrada said.

He wanted to ingratiate himself

"I was surprised. I didn't know why the amount was that big. Probably he just wanted to ingratiate himself," he said of Singson. Months after that gift-giving the friendship frayed and Singson exposed the "jueteng," or illegal numbers, racket that Estrada allegedly ran from Malacaang.

It cannot possibly be a gift for Enriquez since her birthday falls on Sept. 22, whereas the check was issued on Dec. 22, 1999, Estrada added.

Estrada said that he had never seen that check and that it was only mentioned to him by Enriquez.

When Flaminiano showed him a photocopy of the check, Estrada replied: "Probably this is the check."

Check from Estrada payola

On July 24, 2002, Singson testified that the check represented his share when he and other Estrada pals agreed to buy the supposed necklace for Enriquez. The suggestion to pass the hat around, he said, came from businessman Mark Jimenez.

Then testifying as prosecution's star witness, Singson said the check was from his Metrobank account that allegedly contained Estrada's payola collections from jueteng lords.

He then said he found the contribution for the necklace "too much" that's why he drew not from his own pocket but from Estrada's own money.

In that same 2002 hearing, then Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo said the check ended up being deposited in Enriquez's account with a Philippine Savings Bank's branch in Murphy, Quezon City.

In a text message, Singson yesterday insisted on his earlier story. "We pooled our resources to buy Laarni a gift," Singson said.

Denials continued

Estrada's court appearance yesterday went on for 90 minutes. He was later excused to attend to well-wishers on his 69th birthday *(See related story on this page)*.

In his previous testimony, Estrada denied charges that he pocketed P545 million in payoffs to protect illegal gambling operators, calling the allegations nothing but lies.

Overall, prosecutors allege Estrada amassed about P4 billion from jueteng payoffs, tax kickbacks and commissions stashed in secret bank accounts under an alias. Estrada also faces a perjury charge for allegedly under-reporting his assets in 1999.

Estrada continued his denials yesterday, dismissing charges that the establishment of the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation was for money laundering purposes. He said all the foundations he had established during his political career were meant to help the poor.

Their incorporators included some of the most outstanding Filipinos, including former Sen. Jovito Salonga, and top businessmen, Estrada said.

RP teaches Singapore how to handle protests

From page A1

not be as rich but it sure knows how to handle civil liberties issues, including antigovernment protests and demonstrations, a high-ranking police official said.

In fact, Singapore is seeking the expert advice of the Philippine National Police in crowd control and management, knowing that while demonstrations are "rampant in Metro Manila, there have been no deaths here," said Director Vidal Querol, the chief of the National Capital Region Police Office.

The tiny city-state, one of the world's most prosperous nations but also one of the most politically restrictive, wanted to learn how to deal with protesters during the International Monetary Fund-World Bank conferences to be held in the island in September, said Querol, who met with visiting Singapore officials yesterday.

Singaporean laws place strict limitations on citizens' right to free speech and peaceful assembly.

The island-state will have its hands full in September as antiglobalization groups threaten to descend on its antiseptic and orderly streets in an attempt to duplicate their success in previous protest actions against similar international gatherings.

"I gave them some tips and invited them to a crowd disturbance management competition on Sunday," Querol said.

"I want to show them the process of negotiation and dispersal," he said.

Some of the tips that Querol gave the Singaporeans included the following:

- All police actions must have legal basis.
- Make sure that protesters and policemen alike do not carry guns. Intelligence gathering is crucial before the day of the protest action.
- Bring a video camera so a demonstration is recorded and can be reviewed for assessment.
- Boost the morale of the antiriot police. They must learn not to react to taunts, insults and other provocations.

Preparations for the global meeting should also include mock demonstrations so antiriot squads can accustom themselves to a rowdy crowd, said Querol.

The police official said he told his visitors that in the Philippines people are able to "express themselves" yet remain peaceful.

"I want to teach them how to do it, how to disperse and to employ maximum tolerance," he said.

Some demonstrations in Metro Manila have, in fact, turned ugly in the past few months. There have also been some high-profile arrests, but only a few protesters and policemen have been seriously hurt in the rallies.

Street rallies are virtually unknown in Singapore. A permit is required for any form of public speech or entertainment under its Public Entertainment Act.

While the Constitution grants Singapore citizens the right of peaceful assembly, the government restricts this right in practice in the interest of security. A gathering of five or more persons, including political rallies, requires permits from the police.

A few years ago, an opposition Member of Parliament was tried and convicted for attacking the government for lack of accountability in the stewardship of public funds and for calling for greater freedom of speech in public speeches, without obtaining a permit.

This law, however, was relaxed two years ago. Permits are no longer needed for indoor speaking events.

Singapore's Internal Security Act, which has been employed against suspected terrorists, also provides for warrantless arrests.

Historically, these terrorist threats have been communist-related.

Oil prices continue to soar; Senate OKs 3 energy bills

From page A1

2226, the proposed Biofuels Act of 2006, which aims to reduce the country's dependence on imported oil by tapping biofuels like those obtained from plants and animals.

The bill seeks to establish the Philippine Biofuel Board (PBB) to implement the Philippine Biofuel Program, including the setting of standards for biofuels and biofuel-blended gasoline and diesel.

Twenty senators signed Committee Report No. 55 which will be up for approval by the plenary when session resumes next month, including Senators Miriam Santiago and Manuel Villar, chairs of the energy and finance committees respectively. Sen. Rodolfo Biazon signed the report on behalf of food and agriculture committee chair Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.

The Arroyo administration is also scrambling to come up with contingency measures to mitigate the impact of rising oil prices on Filipino consumers.

"That's why it's important that we push for our programs in search of other sources of energy like coco bio-diesel, ethanol from sugar, LPG, compressed natural gas, windmills and others," President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday at a new housing project for soldiers near Fort Bonifacio in Makati.

Crude oil futures surged to fresh record highs on global markets yesterday amid growing fears of a possible military conflict between the United States and Iran.

The benchmark May contract for light sweet crude hit a closing high of $71.35 a barrel and traded as high as $71.60 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, an all-time record.

That crushed the record of $70.85 a barrel last Aug. 30 in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which ravaged US oil operations in the Gulf of Mexico.

Brent crude hits $72.64

The price of Brent North Sea crude oil also hit records in London as the market feared that an attack on Iran could lead to a disruption of its oil exports. The June contract for Brent traded as high as $72.64 a barrel, an all-time record, before settling at $72.51.

Adjusted for inflation, current oil prices remain below levels reached after the 1979 Iranian revolution when they surged to upward of $80 a barrel in today's money.

Washington has accused Iran, the world's fourth-biggest crude producer, of working secretly to build nuclear weapons under cover of a nuclear energy program. The US government has declined to rule out possible military action as an option.

Global Insight analyst Simon Wardell said prices could rocket to above $150 a barrel if Iran retaliated to any US attack by disrupting oil shipping off its coastline.

Because its shores line the narrow Straits of Hormuz, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, Iran could quickly hit both military and commercial shipping with missiles launched from land, air or sea as well as cripple maritime traffic with mines or sunken ships, analysts say.

Greenhouse gases

The Senate bill cited three reasons for tapping into indigenous and renewable sources of fuel: To reduce the country's dependence on imported oil, to mitigate toxic and greenhouse gas emissions and to increase rural employment and income.

The measure seeks to order the mandatory use of alternative fuels like bioethanol, biodiesel, natural gas, electricity, hydrogen and automotive LPG on vehicles instead of gasoline and diesel.

It will involve the use of bioethanol produced from sugarcane and biomass such as animal, municipal or industrial wastes and biodiesel or fatty acid methyl ester derived from vegetable oils or animal fats.

The bill provides that a minimum of 1 percent biodiesel shall be blended in all diesel engines fuels sold in the country immediately after the enactment of the Biofuels Act into law and 2 percent within two years of the law's implementation.

The PBB shall be empowered to increase the percentage up to 10 percent within four years after reviewing the viability of the biofuels program and availability of sources.

Tax incentives will be given to encourage the production and distribution of biofuels. To ensure the mandatory use of biofuels, the bill provides for a penalty of three months to one year imprisonment and a fine of P50,000 to P300,000 for those found violating the law.

In the House of Representatives, Majority Leader Prospero Nograles asked the Senate to give priority to the approval of House Bill No. 4629, the proposed Biofuels Act of 2005, which would help make the country self-reliant in the fuel sector.

In a statement, Nograles said the bill had long been approved by the House after Ms Arroyo certified it as urgent, "and yet the Senate is seemingly just sitting on it."

Take control of Petron

Warning of an imminent "economic meltdown" due to soaring world oil prices, Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco called on government to take back control of Petron Corp. and to "strongly intervene" in setting oil prices in the country.

The government sold 40 percent of Petron to oil giant Saudi Arabian Oil Co. (Saudi Aramco) in 1994.

"The smaller oil players [have] dismally failed in offering a more competitive pricing mechanism through the years that would have leveled the playing field long ago as envisioned by the Oil Deregulation Law," Cuenco said.

Cuenco, chair of the House committee on foreign affairs, also said that the country needed to "adopt a stronger state intervention in the pricing of oil prices and its distribution in the domestic scene."

"Among other things, we need to immediately introduce amendments in the Oil Deregulation Law which has failed to address vital reforms that should have been long achieved so that the Filipino masses would not be heavily burdened every time (oil-exporting) countries cough a hike to fatten further their bloated coffers," he said in a statement.

Cuenco likened the administration's energy-saving proposals to "using a spoon to paddle our way out of the crisis rather than finding a bigger oar."

Summer of discontent

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran said the impact of the administration tax measures last week and soaring oil prices would lead to a "summer of discontent," particularly among those already mired in poverty.

Aside from programs which would help ease the impact of high oil prices on the local economy, Ms Arroyo said she was expanding her pro-poor programs, including making cheaper medicine available all over the country.

Ms Arroyo reiterated her earlier announcement that the administration was able to set up more than 5,000 drug stores selling the most commonly used medicines at 2001 price levels. *With a report from AFP*

FPJ's National Artist award never withdrawn – NCCA

By Alcuin Papa
and Melody Asuque

THE NATIONAL Artist Award FOR the late Fernando Poe Jr. was never withdrawn, according to Cecille Guidote-Alvarez, executive director of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Alvarez made the clarification in yesterday's Ciudad Fernandina media forum in San Juan yesterday. She added that the award for FPJ, who ran against President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 election, had already been approved by Malacañang and there was no use turning the matter into a political issue.

"There was never a withdrawal. The truth is that the selection of FPJ has been affirmed by President Arroyo and was never taken back. I think that the whole issue of FPJ's inclusion in the list of the National Artist awardees has been needlessly spun for political purposes," Alvarez said.

She said Ms Arroyo "has the last say since she is the final arbiter of the awards."

The brouhaha over the National Artist awardees started last week when Malacañang released the list of this year's awardees and quickly withdrew it, saying it was "not final." Aside from Poe, included on the list were Benedicto Cabrera (aka BenCab) for visual arts, Bienvinedo L. Lumbera for literature, Ramon A. Obusan for dance, Ildefonso P. Santos Jr. for architecture, and the late Ramon Valera for fashion design.

The list was taken back by the Malacañang because it had not been finalized yet, Alvarez said, echoing the explanation Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye gave last week.

She also called on the family of Poe, including his widow Susan Roces, to accept the award. Last year, Roces accused Ms Arroyo of stealing the presidency from her husband.

"I know her as a good actress and a lady. Personally, I don't believe she would use this (the award) as a vehicle for political intrigue and drama," Alvarez said.

But she also said Roces had every right to refuse the award. "She can refuse it; we can't do anything about that."

Meanwhile, Alvarez also announced that the Philippines will play host to the 31st World Congress and Theater Olympics sponsored jointly by the International Theater Institute and Unesco from May 16 to May 29 this year.

She said about 150 participants are expected for the World Festival of Drama Schools to be held during the event. Alvarez said the participants, which include some of the world's best theater performers, will show their commitment to use their talents to fight global illiteracy, poverty and injustice.

"The power of the arts should... be mobilized to have a healing effect on the wounds of our national psyche." Alvarez said.

Maui mayor coming for immigration centennial

HAWAII—MAYOR Alan Arakawa will leave for the Philippines this week to mark the centennial of the first immigration of Filipino farmworkers to Hawaii.

In the two-week trip, Arakawa is schedule to meet with President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Malacañang Palace and to tour elementary schools and the University of the Northern Philippines.

In 1906, a group of 15 farmworkers, also known as "sakada," left the Philippines to come to the Big Island to work in sugarcane fields. Since then, the state's Filipino-American population has grown to more than 275,000, second only to California, where more than 1 million live.

Arakawa and his wife, Ann, will be joined by 100 Maui residents, including Apolonio Tabangcura, a native of the Philippines who gave 45 years of service to Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Co.

The 79-year-old Tabangcura has returned to the Philippines about five times over the last 60 years. But he has never been back Cabugao, Ilocos Sur, from where he left for Hawaii in 1946.

"This is a very special trip for us," said Gloria Tabangcura, Apolonio's wife. "We can't wait to see the harbor where he left to get here."

Arakawa, who will visit the Philippines for the first time, is hoping to reinforce historic, cultural and economic ties and reaffirm diplomatic relationships between Maui and sister cities.

The county has at least five sister cities in the Ilocos region of the Philippines.

Arakawa said he grew up on his family farm, which employed as many as eight immigrants from the Philippines.

"And many Filipinos were also customers at our farm, so I heard a lot of stories about the Philippines," he said.

Aside from the sister cities, Arakawa will visit neighboring cities and towns and will conclude his visit in Tagaytay and Manila. *AP*

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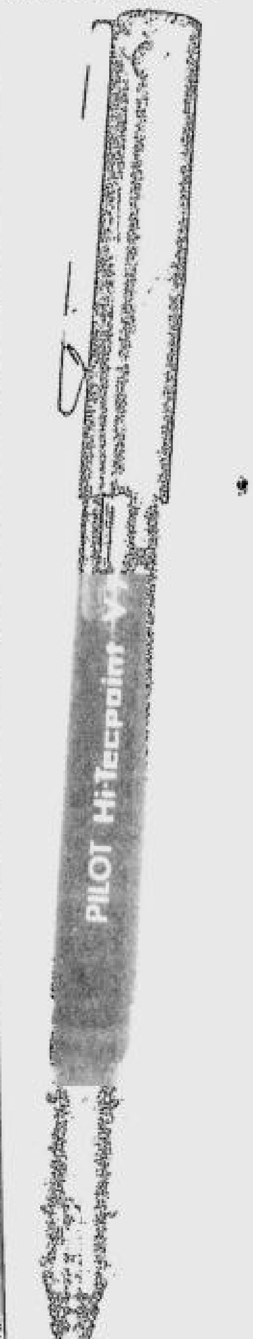

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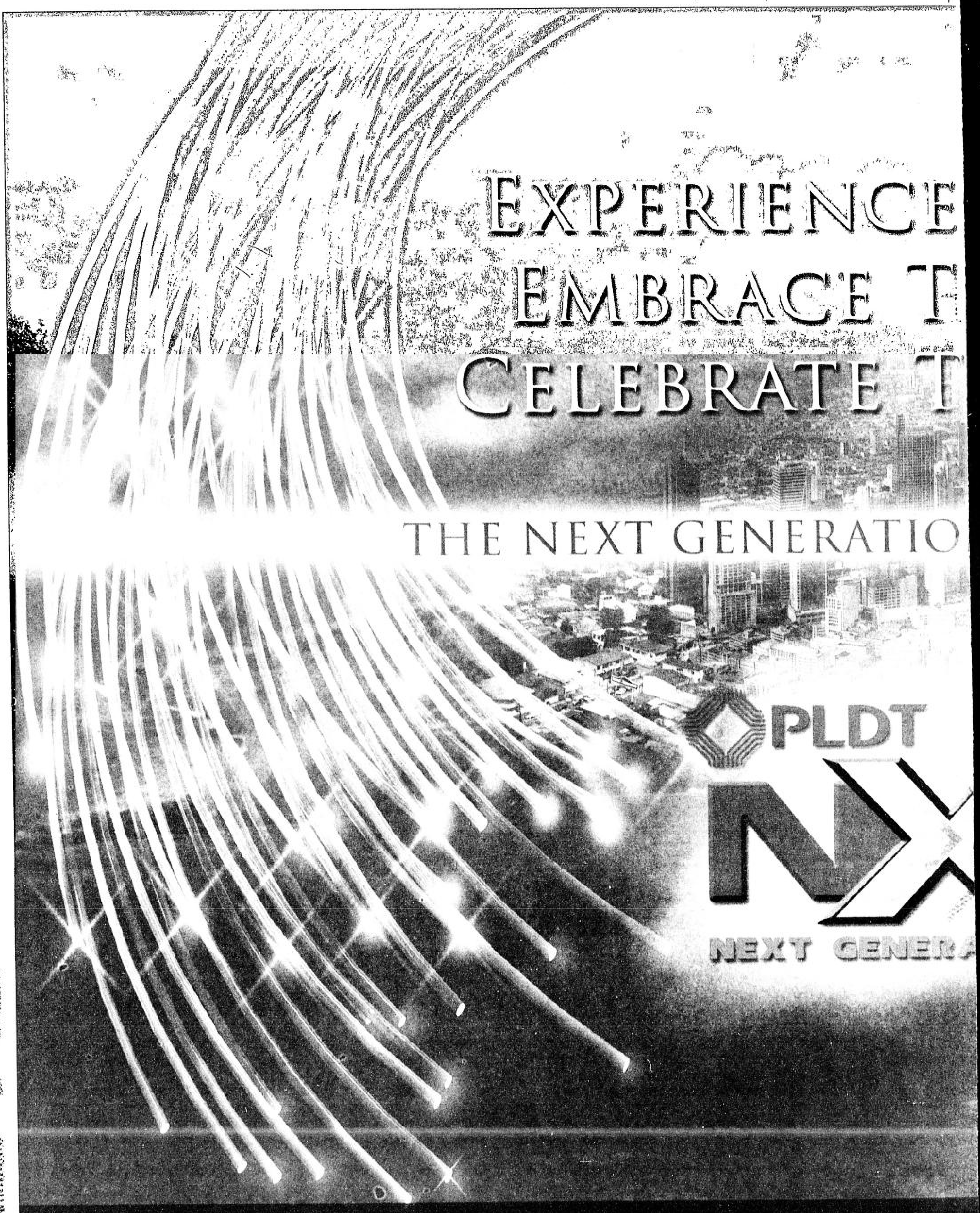

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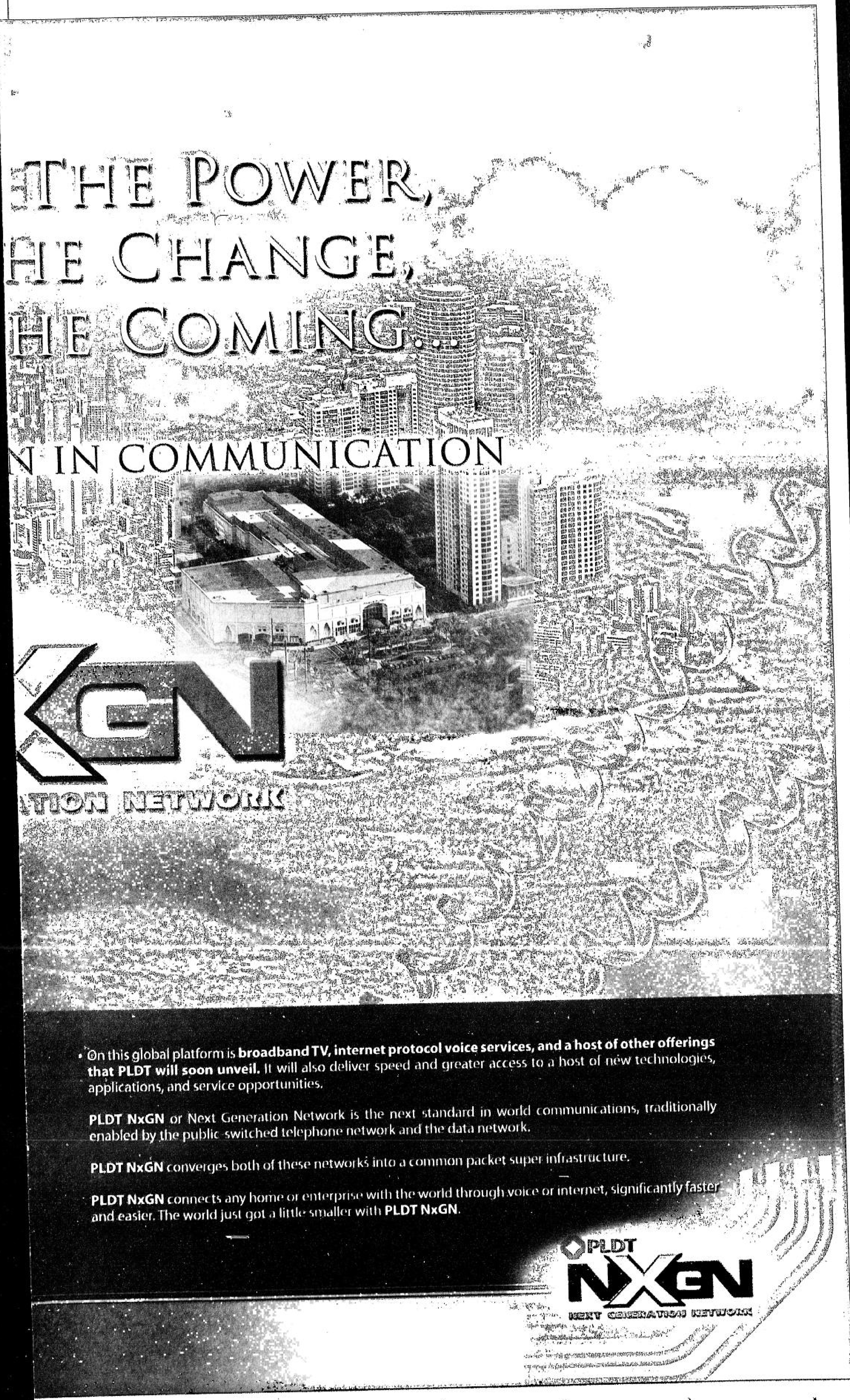
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Profiteering

Editorial

OIL COMPANIES NEVER SEEM TO RUN OUT OF excuses to raise prices. Last year, the reasons were hurricane Katrina, the approach of winter and various political developments that threatened a disruption of oil supplies. This time, with crude oil prices again breaking last year's record and soaring to a new high of $71.46 per barrel, the reasons being given are as many and varied: trouble in Nigeria over the sharing of oil revenues, the worsening confrontation between the United States and Iran over the latter's nuclear program, Iran's $50-million aid to the Hamas-led government of Palestine, the approach of summer in the United States when Americans drive around more than at any other time of the year, and China's 10.2 percent economic growth rate which is expected to keep its appetite for oil healthy. What is glossed over or simply not mentioned is the almost insatiable appetite of the oil companies for profit.

If any industry has perfected the art of turning crisis into opportunity, it must be the international oil industry. The nature of the crisis doesn't matter. Whether a political storm blows or a real hurricane strikes, the oil companies hardly miss the opportunity to make a profit. And last year was a spectacularly profitable one for the industry, not despite all the political troubles and natural disasters but apparently because of them.

Oil companies in the Philippines were not an exception. Last year, Petron Corp. reported an after-tax profit of P6.04 billion, up 76 percent from its net earnings of P3.42 billion in 2004. Pilipinas Shell, on the other hand, more than doubled its 2004 profit of P2.84 billion by netting P5.76 billion in 2005. The country's two oil refiners, which corner 67 percent of the market, thus turned in combined profits of P11.8 billion in 2005 or 88 percent more than what they earned the previous year.

Catanduanes Rep. Joseph Santiago said it was obvious that "soaring crude oil prices" were giving the local oil companies "a lot of leeway" to set pump prices at levels that allowed them to maximize their profits. Because of their "massive pricing power," he said the two oil refiners have been able to ensure for themselves "rapidly expanding margins." He urged the Department of Energy and the Department of Justice to activate the joint task force, created by the Downstream Oil Deregulation Law, to investigate "any report of an unreasonable rise in the prices of petroleum products."

When there is a tremendous increase in profits during a period of rapid—mostly upward—adjustments in prices, some very questionable increases must have happened. And when such things happen during a time when people are already reeling from high prices of goods, there must be more than just a suggestion of profiteering somewhere. So why has the administration not started looking into this? In particular, why has the joint DOE-DOJ task force not swung into action? If the task force cannot smell something illegal and rotten in the financial reports of the oil companies showing their profits virtually doubling in a year's time, then the group is inutile and the law itself becomes useless.

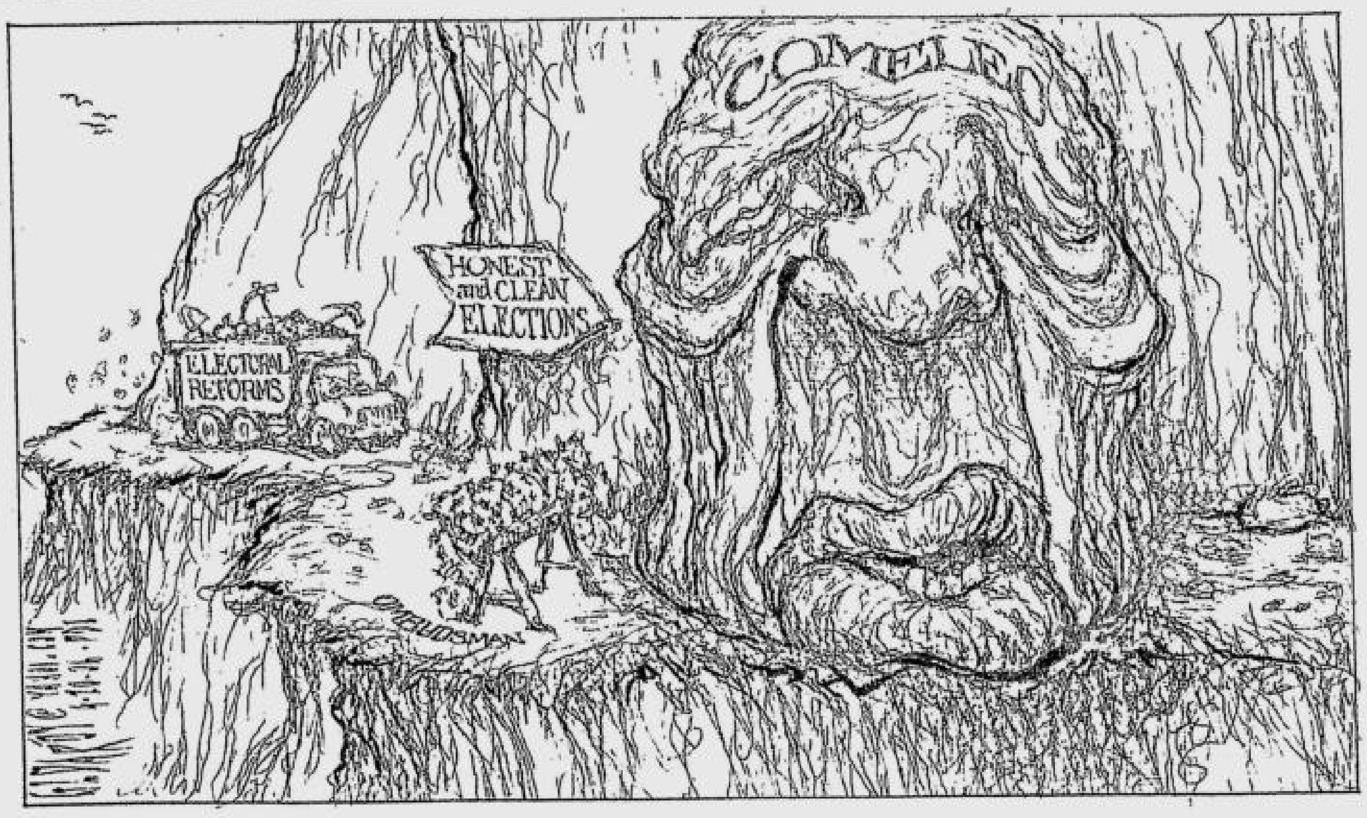
It is not as if this is the first time government officials have heard about such excessive profits being earned by oil companies. Last February, President Macapagal-Arroyo told the oil companies to explain the increases in prices, following reports of record profits they had amassed. It seems nobody told her she was ordering the wrong party.

No alternatives

Foreign Comment

NOW THAT IT HAS A MAJORITY, HOWEVER SMALL IT MAY be, the center-left must try to govern Italy. "Try," that is, because no one can hide the extreme difficulties related to the nature of the coalition that the ballot has selected. The center-left must do this, however, by reappraising the moderate forces and by stressing the weight of the extreme wings. But there aren't any alternatives. This is required, on one hand, by the rules of the democracy: Romano Prodi's coalition, even if it obtained a politically weak victory—because weak is the supporting consensus—has beaten the center-right in any case. On the other hand, the country demands it: at the end of an intense (electoral) campaign, you cannot delay facing problems. It's up to the center-left to demonstrate that it is capable of resolving them.

La Stampa (Milan, Italy)



'Nothin' like a dame'

Viewpoint

Juan L. Mercado

"I AM IN FAVOR OF WOMEN," CONDUCTOR Arturo Toscanini once declared with Italian panache. Filipinos also favor women, says an Asian Development Bank study. But they could do far more for them.

The "Philippines has made significant progress in empowering women," notes the ADB. The country ranked 63rd, based on indicators gauging inequalities between men and women, in 163 countries.

The 1987 Constitution affirms women's equality with men. We've ratified international instruments like the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. And the Philippines is "one of the first republics to grant suffrage to women." Since May 1995, there have been more women voters than men. Some 21 percent of judges and 765,609 of the 1.4 million government employees are women.

"A little more matriarchy is what the world needs, and I know it. Period. Paragraph," Dorothy Parker once wrote. Is this country a matriarchy?

"Some leaders are born women." This country elected Corazon Aquino President in 1986. It has been graced by selfless radiant ladies: Doña Aurora Quezon, war heroine Josefa Escoda, Supreme Court Justice Cecila Muñoz Palma, graft buster Haydee Yorac and others. But then, there also was Imelda.

Today, the Philippines is the world's 13th most populous country. A third of the 85.3 million Filipinos scrounge below poverty lines.

We also are handicapped by "one of Asia's highest levels of income equality." The top 20 percent of the population corners 55 centavos out of every peso. And the poorest 20 percent makes do with four centavos. Only Cambodia and Laos have more undernourished people than the Philippines. The rich here rearrange menus; but the poor can only tighten belts further.

One consequence is more mothers die. "The Philippines continues to have one of the highest maternal mortality rates in Southeast Asia: about four times that of Thailand and twice that of Vietnam."

In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the number of mothers expiring at child birth is thrice more than that in Metro Manila. Other high-casualty regions are: Cagayan Valley, Eastern Visayas and Western and Northern Mindanao.

Yet, many of these deaths are preventable. For health services, our government spends about $33 per capita—piddling compared to the $101 that Malaysia spends. "Quality of health services is the single most pressing issue," says the World Bank's "Filipino Report Card on Pro-Poor Services."

Women and infants bear the brunt of corruption and misrule—in a government run mainly by men, critics say. Of the top 4,981 decision-making official posts, 65 percent are occupied by men. "If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament," Florynce Kennedy sarcastically notes.

Education's record is mixed. Regions where women lagged behind men in functional literacy are: Eastern and Western Visayas plus Northern and Southern Mindanao.

More males drop out from school than females. Male-dominated fields, such as the military and maritime professions, have taken in more women recently. This year, the Philippine Military Academy saw its largest number of women graduates. "There are no significant differences, in the education of men and women," the ADB said.

The problem crops up in the selection of specialized fields. Men go into professions that later translate into higher-paying jobs; women's career choices are shaped by family rearing chores. Estimated women's income in 2001 was 50 percent lower than that of men. Was it Samuel Johnson who said he'd "rather have a good dinner on the table than a wife who spoke Greek"?

The "job gap" finds three males for every two females in the labor force. "Women were dominant as unpaid family workers." And unemployment tended to be higher for women.

Beyond the statistics, however, is the less visible but pervasive "informal sector" which helps "many people survive the pangs of poverty": own-account or sub-contract workers, self-employed laborers etc.

This sector provided "more than 50 percent of total employment in the country for the last 20 years," the International Labor Organization notes. "This estimate is highly understated. If all women's paid labor and unpaid housework were included, the proportion could be as high as 80 percent."

Thus, more women now seek alternative jobs abroad. The recent 5-percent growth in the number of OFWs "was largely fueled by the surge of female employment abroad .... Much of this increase can be traced to Central Luzon and Mindanao."

While they earn more, women OFWs are vulnerable to being treated like doormats. "More than 150,000 cases of human rights violations against Filipino women migrants, around the world, are reported annually."

Violence against women is also prevalent here. This ranges from widespread trafficking to domestic violence to marital rape. "Cases are underreported and reliability of official figures is low," the ADB notes. "Trafficking in women and children is big business. The UN estimates that trafficking is a US$5 billion to $7 billion per year operation worldwide."

There's no shortage of policy, programs and projects for Filipino women—e.g., microfinance, improvement of basic education and health, and combating trafficking. But officials seem more engrossed in keel-hauling the Constitution to guarantee their political skins. They forgot what lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II wrote for the musical "South Pacific": "There's nothin' like a dame."

* * *

CORRECTION: My April 18 column erroneously mentioned a "Dante Ang" as one of the cronies of former President Estrada. I was referring to "Dante Tan" of the stock market imbroglio. Dr. Dante Ang is the chair of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas. My apologies to Dr. Ang and my readers.

* * *

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Death and resurrection

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE ASKED ME IN THE DEEPEST darkness of Holy Week if I had been tempted to give up on the country, too. Indeed, if I had not thought of leaving it at any time. I replied after some reflection: Who hasn't been driven to despair at some point over the last many months at our increased capacity to tolerate wrongdoing and willingness to grope blindly forward hoping to make progress? It's a scale of delusion that could sink the spirits of the most cheerful nun. But the moments of despair have come and gone, and I've always managed to glimpse resurrection at the end of death.

As to leaving this country, my equation has always been simple. The country of my birth is not unlike democracy: It's a horrible place to live in, but all the rest, at least for me, are worse. I find it so much easier to scale down my physical needs than my spiritual ones, my need for creature comforts than my need for self-respect.

My hope is by no means unfounded. The talent to be found among us is boundless, as evidenced by how well we've done abroad. We routinely get recognition in art, especially in music, and the sciences, notably in the many inventions Filipinos have patented here and abroad. We do not lack for ingenuity, we are cursed by it. Our capacity for improvisation has few peers, a fact we've often used to look for shortcuts when simply taking the normal route is the easiest thing to do. We're so ingenious we become lawyers to do everything except obey the law. It is no great exaggeration to say if we could only channel our creativity to non-criminal activities, we could be one of the most prosperous nations of the world.

Over the last couple of weeks, since Thaksin Shinawatra resigned as prime minister of Thailand over corruption charges, in obedience to his King, I've been wondering what's made the Thais exceedingly prosperous and us exceedingly backward. As initial endowments go, we had all the advantages there. I still remember how, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Thais considered themselves lucky to be able to study at the University of the Philippines, notably at Los Baños. A decade or so later, they introduced jasmine rice to the world. A decade or so later, we were importing rice from the world.

Doubtless, a great deal of what laid us low was martial law. But many other Asian countries have known iron-fisted rule as well, and progressed anyway. Doubtless, too, what has allowed Thailand to get far ahead in life owes to varied and complex reasons. But pride is clearly one of them. A sense of right and wrong is clearly one of them. It's not true at all that you can make the economy advance by thinking only about the economy. It's not true at all that you can prosper materially by thinking only about material things. A country doesn't have pride, it won't get anywhere. A country doesn't have a sense of right and wrong, it won't move—never mind "move on."

I don't need to harp on pride, it's patent. That is the one thing Thais have in great abundance—no small thanks to King Bhumibol, who represents not only a living continuity between past and present but also the best that Thais can be—and the one thing we now lack more abysmally than food. It's a vicious cycle: We've made a national motto of "beggars cannot be choosers" because we're backward, and we're backward because we've made a national motto of "beggars cannot be choosers."

The sense of right and wrong, well, that became patent with Thaksin resigning as prime minister a couple of weeks ago. If you need any more evidence to refute the silly notion that to get ahead in life you should forget about official wrongdoing and concentrate only on the economy, just look at Thailand, Japan and Korea. In Japan and Korea in particular, being accused of stealing the people's money is enough to make an official resign—not to speak of being recorded on tape stealing the people's votes. It's no wonder they're prosperous: There is a correlation between prosperity and morality.

It is no accident that the words "moral" and "morale" are almost identical. A people's morality is the foundation of a people's morale. No morals, no morale. It is commonsensical: A country cannot progress without its people uniting, and a people cannot unite on the basis of wrongdoing. A country cannot progress without its people showing enthusiasm and a willingness to make sacrifices, and a people cannot show enthusiasm and a willingness to make sacrifices without justice. Wrongdoing or the forgetting of it can never be the cement that binds a people together. Injustice or the forgetting of it can never be the driving force that makes a people rise beyond themselves to reach for things that lie beyond their grasp. Justice disappears and wrongdoing riots, you will not think of the country first, you will think of yourself first. Which is what's happening to us right now.

All we need is an even break, all we need is a fresh start. There is talent and energy enough among us to push this country through. All we need is to unite behind what is good and decent, all we need is to be led by someone we can trust. All it takes is for us to rediscover our sense of pride and dignity, our sense of aspiration and self-worth—which we do when we're abroad—and we will dazzle heaven itself with our resplendence. All it takes is for us to rediscover our sense of justice, our capacity to rail at what is evil and exult at what is good, and we will rise beyond ourselves, quite literally thinking of country first before self.

And as surely as morale flows from moral, as surely as the sun rises at dawn, as surely as resurrection follows death, we will find our way out of this dark night.

A belated Happy Easter to everyone.

EU applauds commutation

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SPAIN WAS THE FIRST FOREIGN COUNTRY TO congratulate President Macapagal-Arroyo for her bold decision to commute the death sentence of death row convicts. Yesterday, the Palace certified as urgent a bill abolishing the death penalty, which was reimposed by Congress in 1994. As expected, the decision drew both cheers and jeers. Among the loudest cheers are those coming from member-countries of the European Union, where capital punishment has been abolished.

* * *

Recently, we had as guest a European friend who felt so happy over what he described as GMA's enlightened and courageous decision. He said the reason the EU lauds the move is that for Europeans, it's not just a question of taking or not taking a human life, they also believe that criminals ought to be given a chance to reform themselves. He said that whether the death penalty is a real deterrent to crime is open to question. He agreed with Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra that what deters crimes is the arrest of criminals and swift justice. GMA was merely being consistent—she has been pro-life from the beginning.

* * *

I must confess, however, to hold an ambivalent view on this issue. I believe that even hardened criminals can reform, given spiritual and psychological help. But I also realize that the situation in a Third World country such as ours is different from, say, in Scandinavian countries where people don't have to steal to feed their families or get urgent medical treatment for them. These crimes are very real in a poor country, whereas crimes in affluent and socialized countries are driven more by human passions. Also, prosecuting criminals here is more difficult, given our justice system, and so is rehabilitation, given the limited resources of government and society.

* * *

Trust Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman to conduct once again his "*escuela ng bayan*" on this burning issue, as he did on the impeachment issue. Lagman, one of the staunch anti-death penalty advocates in the House, says that if there's any power of the President where the exercise of discretion is "almost absolute," it's the power to grant clemency to felons. But he also points out its constitutional limitations: the President cannot grant clemency to public officials convicted in an impeachment; in the case of election offenses, it cannot be granted without the favorable recommendation of the Commission on Elections. He also stressed that reprieves, commutations and pardons can only be granted after final conviction by the Supreme Court. What about GMA's recent "wholesale commutations"? He says these are "not constitutionally banned," particularly when the basis for the reduction of the penalty "collectively applies to all covered convicts." In other words, no favoritism.

* * *

Speaker Jose de Venecia enplaned for Madrid and Barcelona yesterday. He is a real jet-setter. Only two days earlier, he arrived from Kuala Lumpur where he had a one-hour meeting with former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad on the topmost floor of the gleaming Petronas Towers. Mahathir extolled the merits of the parliamentary system he successfully led for 20 years. According to JDV, he was careful to say he didn't want to interfere in Philippine internal affairs and only wished to share his experience. He noted, however, that the constant fighting between the executive and the legislature in our political system has kept the Philippines from taking its rightful place in the sun. On the popular criticism that in a parliamentary system there would be no check and balance, Mahathir said this would be provided by the opposition. JDV pointed out that Singapore's former PM Lee Kuan Yew also noted the same thing about the RP situation.

* * *

House sources indicate that the drive to get 195 congressmen to support Charter change now counts with 181 signatories. But the target is to get 200 House members and six senators, so that the constituent assembly can get going. On the other hand, I learned that the parallel move of the people's initiative has gathered more than 10 million signatures already, more than double the minimum 12 percent of total registered voters. The target is to get five million more.

In the meantime, its advocates have fanned out across the nation to continue their information drive, and they plan to file their petition with the Comelec before the end of May. But what's this? The election lawyer for the opposition has filed a case against Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos for allegedly being the mastermind behind "Garci." Some people read this as calculated to intimidate Abalos so he does not become hospitable to the initiative.

* * *

Executive Director Cecile Alvarez of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts has announced an on-the-spot contest in painting the canvases of yachts and sailboats this weekend, April 22-23, at the Luneta in celebration of Earth Day and for display next month, which is "Ocean Month." The idea is to transform these sails into works of art for display in a unique gigantic outdoor gallery—dubbed the "Gallery of the Sea"—with the Manila Bay as the magnificent backdrop. The contest, coordinated by the Art Association of the Philippines and the Manila Yacht Club, which is donating canvases for 30 sailboats, was inspired by a sailboat painting contest held in 2002 sponsored by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under then Secretary Heherson Alvarez. This weekend's contest is expected to draw artists from all over the country. The "Gallery of the Sea" will be an added feature of the 31st International Theater Institute-Unesco sponsored "Inter-cultural World Congress and Theater Olympics of the Nations," which the Philippines will host next month. For particulars, call 0920-544-6707 or 0915-519-1902, or Tel. 363-7799.

Elpidio de la Victoria, Earth Day martyr

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THINGS WERE BEGINNING TO GRIND TO A halt on Wednesday of Holy Week when the murderer struck. He chose the time when media coverage would be minimal, government offices would be closed and most people would be in their homes and in church or away somewhere.

In fact, news about the murder didn't come out in the national print media until four days later, on Easter Sunday. The Cebu media gave it major treatment though. The INQUIRER had a brief account on Page A20, part of which read:

"One of the city's leading crusaders against illegal fishing died Thursday, a day after he was shot four times by an unidentified assailant while he was about to enter his house in Barangay Dauis, Talisay City.

"Elpidio de la Victoria, 46, program director of Cebu City's Bantay Dagat Commission and the city's market administrator, was shot in the back and arm and twice in the buttocks at around 3 p.m. on Wednesday. He died at the Chong Chua Hospital at 8:50 a.m. the next day."

Four shots in all. The killer wanted to be sure his prey died right there and then. (A suspect, a policeman, has been tagged.)

De la Victoria was also an officer of the Philippine National Association of Fish Wardens and an active member of the Visayan Sea Squadron.

I didn't know De la Victoria (Jojo to his friends) personally, but I know the advocacy he was involved in; which could be a reason why he was marked for elimination.

A few weeks before he was murdered, I did write about the threatened Visayan Sea (PDI, 3/23/06) that De la Victoria and his colleagues have been trying to defend. Once so rich with its seemingly limitless abundance of marine life, the Visayan Sea was described as the Alaska of the Philippines. Alas, massive, unregulated and destructive fishing has since degraded the ecological richness and diversity of this area. Some species of fish are supposedly facing extinction.

What De la Victoria and his fellow guardians of the sea were trying to do was simply to get the government to enforce the laws (and there are a good many). But because the government has not been up to it, NGOs and local officials, mainly from Iloilo, Negros and Cebu, wrote a petition asking higher authorities to give the Visayan Sea time to rest and recuperate. These advocates pledged to participate and cooperate with one another in self-assessment for environmental compliance audit, total eradication of illegal and destructive fishing, as well as for identifying main areas of interest. They also asked that a Philippine Navy gunboat be permanently assigned in the Visayan Marine Triangle (at the apex of which lies the Visayan Sea).

Well, this is one sure way of making fierce and murderous enemies. They kill the sea, why can't they kill you?

There is another angle to this murder. De la Victoria's death could have been related to his job as market administrator. Whatever be the motive, the killing of De la Victoria was certainly a blow to the Visayan Sea campaign.

One week before De la Victoria was killed, he wrote a piece titled "Speak Out: Protecting small fisherfolk" that came out in Cebu's Sun-Star. He must have angered the giants. Here are excerpts:

"Most, if not all, giant fishing outfits do not limit their operations to the open sea, (they) also fish near the shores and compete with marginal fishermen.

"Since commercial fishing ventures destroy near-shore fishing grounds, local government units should do something about it and take steps to protect small fishermen who could be deprived of their means of livelihood.

"The Fisheries Code or Republic Act No. 8550 aims to reduce the over-exploitation of municipal waters by providing alternative livelihood resources and beefing up environment friendly aquaculture activities that would encourage a shift from fish hunting to fish husbandry."

De la Victoria argued that "the rights of fisherfolk will also be protected because they are given 'preferential use' of the municipal waters."

He noted however that many fisherfolk think that RA 8550 is not working to their advantage because while the commercial fishers are given access to the richer fishing grounds (10 to 15 km from the shoreline), the small ones could not go farther out. Worse, the commercial fishers destroy the fishing areas not meant for them (1 to 7 km from the shoreline).

According to De la Victoria, the Fisheries Law of 1998 has allowed the entry of fishing vessels weighing 3.1 tons to 150 tons into municipal waters. However, he said, the local government, through the chief executive, and acting pursuant to an appropriate ordinance, may authorize or permit small and medium fishing vessels to operate within 10.1 to 15 km from the shoreline provided that no commercial fishing is allowed in municipal waters with a depth of less than seven fathoms.

In this setup, De la Victoria said, small fishermen should organize themselves into cooperatives to be able to engage in deep sea or offshore fishing which is ideal and environmentally sound.

One shouldn't get killed for saying these. But De la Victoria had been warned. His life and death fit right into Earth Day meditations.

****

Earth lovers are invited to celebrate Earth Day (Saturday, April 22) beginning with a 6:30 a.m. Mass on Smokey Mountain, which is a garbage dump no more. In its place has risen a new community. The main celebrant is Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales. Mother Earth mover Odette Alcantara promises a meaningful liturgy and related activities. To go there, take Roxas Boulevard, go toward Del Pan Bridge, then go further on.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Executive clemency

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

I would like to reproduce here, something I wrote elsewhere on Dec. 9, 2003. There are times when something that's been written becomes relevant once more. I do not think it is proper to question the President's motives for reiterating her policy of not permitting any executions during her term. But questioning whether such a policy is proper or not is always appropriate.

I'd also like to point out that not everyone who has lost a loved one to a violent crime favors the death penalty. My father, who lost his mother, a sister and a brother-in-law in as horrific and violent a way as could be imagined, was always foursquare against the death penalty. It could be added he also lost a grandfather and an uncle in a violent manner, and it didn't prevent his father from opposing the death penalty.

MALACAÑANG PALACE IS FULL OF REMINDERS of a very important privilege: that of granting executive clemency. Legend has it that the main stairs of the Palace were climbed by Rizal's mother on her knees, in a last effort to beg the Spanish governor general for the life of her son. Research has determined that Doña Teodora Alonso and her daughters (though it is debated whether she, and not just her daughters, actually went) didn't get as far as the gate, where a secretary of the governor general eventually talked to them, was given a message, relayed it to the governor general, and eventually told them their appeal would be rejected.

Whatever the actual circumstances, for the generation alive during the revolution and beyond, the image of that great lady ascending Malacañang's stairs on her knees was a powerful one, made even more potent by the fact that it would have been such a Filipino thing to do: what mother would not abase herself to beg for her son's life, particularly when the law is inexorably—and unfairly—enforced? In his memoirs, Manuel L. Quezon wrote that when he climbed the Palace stairs as President, he recalled the Rizal legend and that is why he issued a stay of execution for every convict due to be sent to the electric chair during his presidency.

There is another reminder of the power to pardon, and that is a large table made of the finest native hardwoods, that is the central feature of the Reception Hall of the Palace. It was carved by ex-convicts as a present to President Quezon and the convicts carved their prisoner numbers on the table to remind the recipient of who they were—people who had been granted a pardon. The table was a focal point of the Palace until Marcos. It became the dining table at Arlegui during the Aquino and Ramos administrations, and was returned to the Palace by President Estrada to serve as a dining table, until President Macapagal-Arroyo restored it to its traditional place.

These symbols in the official residence of our presidents point to the importance of the power to pardon and commute, and it is one our presidents should not take lightly. In a country where every chief executive makes a personal commitment to "do justice to every man," it is a powerful reminder of how our presidents are viewed as having a personal relationship with every citizen. I cannot think of any president who did not use the power to pardon and commute, but most exercised this power as a rare privilege. After all, the president is also sworn to "uphold and defend" the Constitution and as far as the government is concerned, "execute its laws," which, for a country that had the death penalty continuously until 1987 and once more in recent years, meant that as a rule, presidents were obligated to allow executions unless reason could be found to commute the death sentence handed down by the courts. Presidents opposed in principle to the maximum penalty have been rare; you have the case of Quezon who did so without fanfare, to the extent that people are still shocked when I tell them he opposed it and didn't allow executions during his presidency (though a reader once claimed executions did take place, though I haven't verified this). You have Presidents Estrada and Arroyo who established a blanket moratorium on executions.

Personally, I am not convinced about the legitimacy of a policy of a blanket moratorium. No one has questioned it before the courts, but couldn't it be perceived as an affront to justice? The Constitution prohibits death as a penalty unless Congress in its wisdom re-institutes it. Congress did. The question then is, can the executive's power to pardon and commute be exercised on an all-encompassing scale? To do so, I would argue, violates the assumptions on which any exercise of the executive power-privilege should be based: a personal decision, on a case-by-case basis, informed by a personal investigation into the individual merits of a case that begs for executive clemency.

A president may, in his or her heart of hearts, take a moral position against the death penalty, but it is incumbent on that president to at least maintain the appearance of a personal intervention, a considered decision, by picking up the phone each and every time, as the time of execution draws near, to tell the warden the execution has been called off. It reminds everyone concerned that the law was not being thwarted in a general sense, but instead, the maximum penalty substituted for another (death for life imprisonment) on an individual basis. A blanket moratorium is an expression of subversion—subverting a law enacted by the representatives of the people. An intervention on the basis of the merits of an individual case, instead, upholds a privilege in the form of a power based on the tragic history of our country, and in keeping with our characteristics as a people. While we are a people who believe in revenge, we are also a people who value compassion.

Questions from afar

YOUNG BLOOD

Wiko Kabiling

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

LAST FRIDAY, I SAW THREE THINGS THAT GOT ME THINKING. In the morning on my way to breakfast, I saw a car parked in front of one of the museums near our apartment. The bumper had the following words in bold letters: "**Impeach the treasonous louts.**" Later that day, I walked by the White House and noticed a protester picketing within 50 meters of the gates and holding up a large yellow placard decrying the use of nuclear weapons by any country, including the United States. Finally, I came across three sidewalk vendors selling black shirts with white prints that screamed, "Stop bitching. Start a revolution!"

That day, I did not see any water cannons. Neither did I witness anyone being arrested. This is not to say that one country has more freedom of speech than another. Personally, I don't even think the situation in the Philippines and that in the Unites States are comparable in the first place. Yet seeing all these in one day, however foreign they may seem, made me ask a lot of questions about home.

Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." In the same sense, we might say that the unexamined nation is not worth loving. Thus, even as many of us Filipinos are already bothered by numerous questions, I dare to put forward some more:

What really constitutes freedom of speech? When Voltaire said, "I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it," to whom was he talking? What did he really mean? Who was listening? If one is allowed to speak without the cause ever being heard or the call ever being heeded, is that still freedom of speech? If one's thoughts are expressed, but in an environment where one fears being arrested, is that person truly free?

Aren't some Filipinos out in the streets because they are tired of a system that does not hear them through the formal process? Aren't some Filipinos avoiding the streets because they feel tired of all the rallying, citing the lack of any real progress even after the many rallies in our history?

Are the two schools of thought really so different? Aren't both groups simply tired with the status quo? Aren't both groups simply angry because they were not heard? Aren't both groups, in a sense, victims of a fundamental lack of freedom of speech?

Is it really a matter of taking sides? Do we see a little of ourselves in both? Should we allow ourselves to be divided and conquered in this way?

Are my thoughts subversive? If read, would this composition incite rebellion? If yes, should this even be published in the first place? Is this propaganda? Is this considered criminal? Is this a form of "destabilization"? Why?

What is so wrong with destabilization? What exactly is destabilization in the first place? Where do we draw the line between destabilization and plain criticism?

Why do I find myself reading more of the news on the Philippines now that I am away than when I was back home? Why do many things foreign stimulate thoughts of my home country?

Do the millions of Filipinos around the world feel the same way? What are they doing about it? What am I doing about it? Where do we fit in this crucial point of our history? Did we ever really leave? Are we really so far away?

Regardless of where we are, how will our attitudes toward the current crisis shape the minds of young people, the future leaders of our country? Would it propel them to live lives that seek and uphold the truth? Would they possess the spirit that brings about new and better things?

What questions will they ask? Or will they even ask any? Will they be free? What then?

Is it the answers we think we have that matter? Or is it really the questions we are willing to ask?

Wiko Kabiling, 23, obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees in industrial engineering from De La Salle University, where he also taught for two terms. He now lives in Washington, D.C.

Bypassed

Athene

WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THIS? I'VE BEEN WORKING PAtiently, efficiently, productively, and the credit and the promotion go to someone else! Here I sit silently contemplating how I could have been overlooked. Yes, I have just been bypassed for promotion, for the third time. In the eyes of some people, this is all sour grapes. But I am wondering what went wrong.

The office's high turnover rate has made me the resident senior—by default. I serve as the unofficial supervisor in the absence of my superiors: my boss, my boss' assistant, my boss' boss and various department heads. When these people make their rounds, go on their break, attend meetings or handle guests' complaints, I am called upon to "watch the house and care for the little ones."

My juniors look up to me for assistance when problems arise. And though I have to set my work aside, I oblige them. I am mother hen to the children of the workplace. Duty or not, part of the job description or not, I answer their call. And often I leave the office an hour later than everyone else so I can finish the work I placed on hold.

And what do my sacrifices reap? I don't know, but they just awarded to someone else the position I have been unofficially serving for three years now. And all that my boss can tell me by way of an explanation is: "It's not what you know, but who you know."

I feel so disappointed and frustrated! Politics *lang pala ang kailangan dito*. I may have earned the respect of my junior colleagues, but my bosses cannot see this or they refuse to see it. I feel like I have been used. Why do I even bother?

At 11:30 that night, I got the answer. My junior called me at home asking for help in fixing a botched operation. And though she could have asked the newly appointed officer for help, and though I was off duty, I told her how to go about rectifying the situation.

That was when I began to realize why I bother to assume responsibilities: Because whether I feel anything for my superiors or not, I care for my juniors. It's like motherhood—a thankless job. No one guarantees you a pat on the back, a million-peso prize or a return for your hard work. You just give without thinking of getting anything in return because of your undying and unconditional love.

That was when I also realized that a position does not make one a leader. Title may confer on someone authority but not influence or credibility. I may not have been given recognition by my managers, but I have the respect of my juniors. Leadership is more than a title. When someone can turn complete strangers into a team and lead them to achieve a common goal, they can reap benefits for the company. I care for my juniors because I care for the company.

If the managers are too preoccupied with office politics to realize this, there really is little I can do about it. I won't waste my time ruing their narrow-mindedness. I will just continue to care for my juniors, my "kids," the rank and file, who make up the building blocks of the company.

Athene, 26 is a senior officer at a five-star hotel.

Rule of law and equality dead

THE OPEN DEFIANCE BY OMbudsman Merceditas Gutierrez of the Supreme Court's order, directing her office to determine the criminal liability of persons involved in the P1.7-billion Mega Pacific election equipment irregularity, shows arrogant disdain for morality and duty.

"The Ombudsman has no duty to render reports on the status, eventual outcome and completion of its investigation on the Comelec Mega Pacific consortium controversy," she was quoted as saying by the INQUIRER. ("Ombudsman exempt from contempt—Gutierrez," PDI, 3/3/06) She claimed that as a constitutional office, the Ombudsman was "independent."

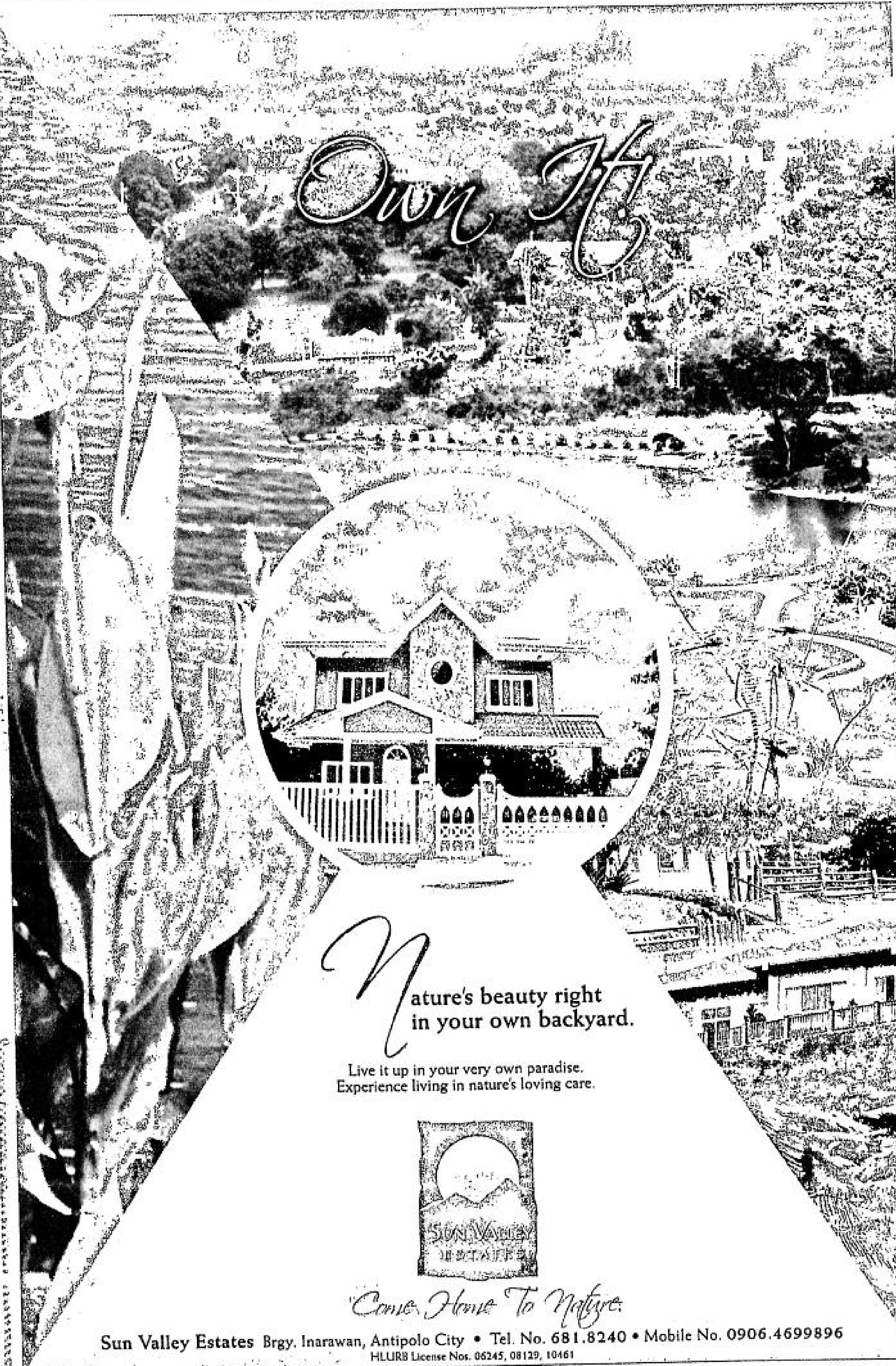
Maybe, what she meant was that, having been appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo as Ombudsman, she is answerable only to the President. She is probably afraid that an investigation would point the responsibility for the scam directly to the Palace, to which she owes her high position.

It is also the duty of the President to "execute the laws"—a duty she vowed to fulfill when she took her oath of office. Thus, the President must also order or request the Ombudsman to investigate the alleged irregularity and prosecute those who are found guilty.

But is Gutierrez's contemptuous attitude toward any suggestion that she investigate the matter a reflection of the Palace attitude? Is she playing her part in the pattern of cover-ups relating to the 2004 presidential elections—from the railroading of the canvassing in Congress, the muddling-up of the Garci tapes, the instant rejection by the House of the impeachment complaint, the suppression of freedom of expression and assembly through an emergency decree and a virtual military rule with the President as commander in chief?

If so, then the rule of law and equality before justice exist no more in our country.

—**TRISHA MAYOR,**
BF Homes, Parañaque City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What the country needs to focus on

AMANDO DORONILA'S MARCH 22 column brought to the fore a lot of points worth pondering. Foremost of these is the question why protest actions against President Macapagal-Arroyo have failed to draw the critical mass for a successful people power. To this question we can surmise some answers:

1. People have gotten sick and tired of mass actions because such initiatives benefit only a few political leaders.

2. Opposition leaders don't carry enough moral authority to rally people round a cause. When the accusers and the accused possess the same moral color, what fool is he who will side with any of them?

3. The issue of election cheating is actually a non-issue as far as the majority of the people are concerned. Political fraud has always been part and parcel of our political landscape since the time of President Elpidio Quirino. So, who cares about cheating except the vanquished?

It's high time that we paused and identified the most pressing issue facing our country. It's not GMA definitely. It's not electoral fraud. "It's the economy, stupid!" (to borrow the Clinton political war cry). What the country needs to do is to extricate itself from the economic rut it has gotten into. Let's try to look around, right among our Asian neighbors and we cannot fail to see that all are sweating it out in the economic race. Leading the pack are China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Singapore and Taiwan, not necessarily in that order. Like us, these countries are not free from political troubles, but they don't allow political issues to becloud their economic goals.

It's high time we gave our country a chance. Let's beat political swords into economic plowshares and hunker down to the task of regaining our once enviable place as Asia's economic tiger, second only to Japan in the 1960s.

Recently, despite all the political uproar, our economy has been able to chalk up some degree of growth and robustness as shown by the appreciation of the peso and the increase in the price indices in the stock market. These are signs of economic health, not malaise.

So why not make it the springboard for economic take-off? And we can do it. All that is needed is to lay aside endless political bickerings and focus on solving the economic problems of the country. That's our sure gateway to economic freedom.

—**BASILIO CALAPRE,**
Maasin City, Southern Leyte

Let's not give up on ADHD children

MY CHILD, WHO HAS BEEN WITH San Beda College Alabang (SBCA) since kindergarten, was denied readmission to Grade 4 for school year 2006-2007, not for any serious infraction but because he has Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). We appealed the decision since this was made without prior consultation and supporting professional judgment—and because, according to the vice principal, my child's adviser and some teachers were against his non-admission—but to no avail. Likewise, appeals for a personal audience with Rev. Anscar Chupungco, SBCA rector-president, were turned down as he simply referred the matter back to the board.

Though with ADHD tendencies, my child is fully functional. He has coped with his condition in SBCA through the patience and understanding of well-meaning teachers like his former guidance counselor and the previous principal. It is unfortunate that the current principal and board of admissions have chosen to put to waste these great mentors' effort by arbitrarily singling out my child for non-admission despite the fact that there were other children with ADHD and worse behavioral problems in that school. If this is not discrimination, I do not know what to call it.

Worse, the rector, by his action or non-action, has shown indifferent neglect and outright arrogance to the plight of my child. We have paid more than a million pesos of hard-earned money to send our children to that school and the rector could not even spare us his time. Perhaps, he would be happy to know that my child is devastated and, at a young age of 9, has been forced by their action to deal with emotional trauma.

Lest this be misconstrued as a prejudiced lament of a parent bemoaning what happened to his child, let me state that I have taught in college at the same school for six years, and I have had a student with ADHD. I treated him as a normal student while making adjustments to address his condition and he passed my course satisfactorily.

I hope that this message will open the eyes of school authorities and government officials to the difficulties faced by the growing number of parents and children with ADHD, which for the record, is not a disease or an abnormality but a condition.

One of the coping mechanisms in dealing with this condition is to ensure a stable and normal environment, including that of the school. Acceptance is an important ingredient that could lead to the well-being of a child with ADHD. They need not be ostracized or penalized or discriminated against for their condition. They do not need pity but understanding and patience. Children with ADHD do not need special schools but mentoring with nurturing in a normal environment.

Finally, may we address our concerns to any regulatory body governing child's welfare and the educational system.

—**AMOR FRANCISCO-LAHOZ,**
L1 B16 Faith St.,
Camella Homes Classic,
Pilar Village, Las Piñas City

Sharing Aman with the world

CONSTANTINO TEJERO'S FEATURE on painter Aman's works, on exhibit at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, helps bring young but exceptional artists like Aman to the forefront of the art scene. (PDI, 3/20/06)

We thank Tejero and the INQUIRER for sharing Aman with the world. We hope to read more about him in future INQUIRER articles.

By the way, the Theory of Relativity should be ascribed to Einstein, not Darwin.

—**ANGIE QUADRA,**
angiequadra@yahoo.com

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Across the NATION

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Salon chain owner's resort opposed

AARON VICENCIO/CONTRIBUTOR

FEAR

A woman who took part in a recent rodeo in Masbate screams as a bull comes charging in the team lassoing event. The Rodeo Masbateño is an annual event that draws tourists and visitors to the island-province.

By Blanche S. Rivera

HAIRSTYLIST RICKY REYES' LATEST STYLE OF development may not be the rave among fishermen in Calatagan, Batangas.

Leaders of the Kilusang Mangingisda yesterday submitted documents and pictures to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources signifying their opposition to the planned expansion of Reyes' resort in Barangay I, Calatagan, Batangas.

KM national chair Ruperto Aleroza said Reyes was planning to develop the sandbar area across his Golden Sunset Resort and has started construction of a wharf leading to it despite the absence of permits from the DENR.

Aleroza said the privatization of the public domain would displace many fishermen who rely on the marine ecosystem for a living.

He said Reyes' proposed development would also affect the seaweed farm being managed by fishermen's families and which has become an alternative source of livelihood for the fishing community.

Nineteen of 25 barangays in Calatagan, an emerging tourist destination, are coastal villages where more than half of the population depend on the sea for a living.

Environmental lawyer Maria Paz Luna, who is assisting the fishermen, said Reyes' planned resort on the sandbar would be 'nearly impossible' to build because of numerous legal restrictions which Reyes would have to hurdle.

Luna said the ECC secured by Golden Sunset Resort was for the construction of the original resort and not the proposed development of the sandbar.

"Whatever he does in the sandbar and water, like starting a wharf already, is a violation of the ECC," she said.

The DENR will send a team next week to conduct an ocular inspection of the developments in Reyes' property and the nearby waters.

When sought for comment, Reyes confirmed plans to develop the sandbar into a resort, but denied that any construction has started for the proposed structures.

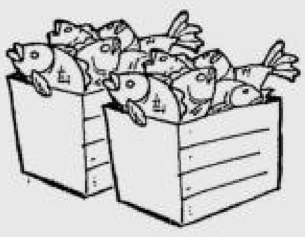
"We're just cleaning up the area. I will not move without the legal sanction," Reyes told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

Luna said the area being planned for development by Reyes was a sea grass area, a feeding ground of the endangered marine turtle and *dugong*.

Reyes, however, said that the barangay council has already passed a resolution approving the expansion.

ROUNDUP

Illegally caught fish seized



LUCENA CITY—Police and environmentalists intercepted 22 boxes of suspected illegally caught fish along the Maharlika Highway on April 6. Police said they also arrested seven persons in a six-wheel Isuzu Elf truck with license plate WEF-247 at a checkpoint in Barangay Talipan, Pagbilao town. Police team leader Senior Insp. Edmundo Andaluz said the 48 boxes of assorted fish came from Paracale, Camarines Norte. Fish examiners found that 22 of the boxes were caught with the use of explosives or dynamites. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

NPA leader held

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police intelligence agents in Batangas arrested an alleged high-ranking leader of the New People's Army in Sitio Puyo, Barangay Sta. Clara in Batangas City on April 6. The suspect, Dionisio Almonte, is allegedly an NPA leader in Southern Tagalog and team leader of a guerrilla unit under the Eduardo Dagli Command, police said. The arrest of Almonte was covered by a warrant issued by the Municipal Trial Court of Mauban, Quezon. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cop shoots boss, self

REINA MERCEDES, Isabela—A policeman killed himself after he shot and killed the chief of this town's police on April 10, reports said. SPO2 Ricardo Pilar, who was drunk, went to the police station looking for his superior, Insp. Vicente Dalupang, at about 11:30 p.m. to confront the official, reports said. Pilar had been reprimanded by Dalupang for his failure to report for duty the previous week. When Dalupang went out of his office, he again castigated Pilar and this led to a heated argument, reports said. It was at this instance when Pilar shot Dalupang, who took bullets in the head and neck. Pilar went home, got a .45 cal. pistol and shot himself. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

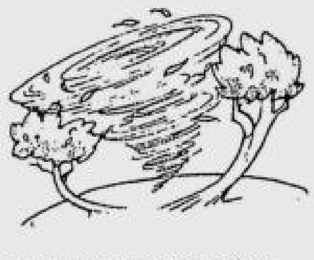
Money lender slain

ORION, Bataan—An Indian businessman engaged in money lending was shot and killed by three motorcycle-riding men on Sunday in Barangay Calungusan here. Supt. Asterio Cumigad, town police chief, said Hanek Singh, 51, of Barangay Rizal, Pilar town, was collecting daily loan payments from his clients in Orion when three men stopped him. One of them, police said, shot the victim with a 9 mm pistol. The killers took the victim's new Honda motorcycle. Cumigad said Singh fought back, prompting his attackers to shoot him. He died instantly from a bullet wound in the head, police said. *Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Worker buried alive

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A construction worker died after slabs of concrete fell on him while he was working in a construction site in a hospital in Tanauan City on Monday afternoon. Supt. Manuel Abu, Tanauan police chief, identified the victim as Oliver Mojica, 31, of Barangay Lamesa, Calamba City. Abu said the victim was working in the renovation site of the CP Reyes General Hospital on Mabini Avenue in Barangay Poblacion when part of the concrete flooring of the hospital collapsed. He said the victim was crushed to death and buried under the slabs. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Freak tornado causes panic



COTABATO CITY—A freak tornado surprised people here when it struck and toppled two acacia trees at Plaza Rizal on Saturday. Except for the uprooting of the decades-old trees, no damage was reported, said city police spokesperson Senior Insp. Samson Obatay. A few late afternoon plaza goers scampered for safety when the tornado hit the area, blowing away boards and debris. "It happened so swiftly. The sky darkened, then came heavy rain and the strong wind that came from nowhere," a vendor said. *Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

UP Class '66 reunion

MEMBERS of the University of the Philippines' Class 1966 will hold a reunion on April 29 at the UP Cornell (UPCO) swimming pool in UP Los Baños. The reunion, starting at 9 a.m., will be a prelude to the UP alumni homecoming on June 24. Class members will be the ruby jubilarians. Their slogan, "Go for Gold in 10!," is in preparation for 2016, when the class will be the golden jubilarians. Class members in UP Los Baños will host the reunion. Those who wish to join the reunion may sign up with Andrew O. Nocon (Tel. No. 5208371 or 0918-9301529) or Dr. Lydia Rodriguez Arcellana (Tel. No. 9298226/9318894 or 0920-9149374).

Court told dictionary should not determine gender

NASA LOOB ANG PAGKATAO!

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE lawyer of the male nurse who wanted to be officially recognized as a female following a sex change operation said the concept of what a woman is should not be limited to the dictionary.

"The definition in the dictionary is incomplete and traditional as it limits gender to whether or not a person can give birth," said lawyer Rosemarie Pia Lamadrid-Sagsago.

"The sexuality of a person must be viewed in terms of his or her psychological and emotional manifestations and in light of the progress brought about by science and technology," she said.

Sagsago earlier filed a petition for sex change at the regional trial court here on behalf of the male nurse who had been certified by experts as a female.

The nurse, who now works in a hospital in London, underwent a "genital sex reassignment surgery" at the Aikchol Hospital in Chonburi, Thailand, on Sept. 4, 2003.

The nurse, 33, wanted his sex appearing in his original birth certificate in Mankayan, Benguet, where he was born on Dec. 7, 1972, be amended to female.

He said he decided to undergo sex change operations since he had always acted as a female since childhood, a fact that was confirmed by a battery of psychiatric tests for gender identity.

But the Department of Justice and the Office of the Solicitor General asked the court to dismiss the petition because there was no legal basis to correct the nurse's sex in his birth certificate since he was born as a man.

But Sagsago said the law must be dynamic and adjust to present realities.

"Globalization has brought about sex change operations and changes in gender and physical attributes of transsexuals," she said.

"If the law would turn its back on these realities, it would create an incongruity ..." *Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

₱9.2M in new donations turned over to S. Leyte

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—THE OFFICE OF Civil Defense has turned over P9.2 million to the provincial government of Southern Leyte as part of its commitment to help develop the relocation site intended for survivors of the landslide that buried the village of Guinsaugon in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte in February.

OCD administrator Glenn Rabonza said the amount was part of the more than P74 million received by the government through the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) from local and foreign donors.

He said Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias and St. Bernard Mayor Maria Lim received the donation, in the form of a check, in simple rites at the municipal hall yesterday.

Rabonza, a retired major general of the Philippine Army who once held the post as Eastern Visayas' top Army officer, said the amount would be spent at the relocation site, in close coordination with the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council chaired by Lerias.

The six-hectare relocation site in Barangay Magbagacay will be occupied by 321 families who survived the landslides that erased Barangay Guinsaugon from the map.

The municipal government bought the property for P3 million with donated money.

Cordillera tribes to hold tribunal

BAGUIO CITY—TO MARK THE DEATH OF Cordillera martyr Macli-ing Dulag, tribal chiefs and youth in Cordillera will hold a people's tribunal on April 24 to hear cases of human rights violations allegedly committed by the Arroyo administration against indigenous peoples (IPs).

Imelda Tabiando, spokesperson of the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance, said the tribunal was an alternative to legal courts which she claimed failed to grant justice to the IPs.

The tribunal will be composed of 15 representatives of tribal leaders, lawyers, youths and professionals.

About 3,000 people are expected to join the Cordillera Day celebration at Barangay Western Uma in Lubuagan, Kalinga.

The event marks the death of Dulag, chief of the Butbut tribe, who was killed by soldiers for leading the opposition to the Chico Dam in Kalinga. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Gunmen attack Cotabato village; hundreds flee

MIDSAYAP, NORTH COTABATO—HUNDREDS of villagers fled their homes after about 50 armed men attacked Barangay Tugal here yesterday.

The attack came three days after Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) renegades killed the barangay chair, Tubog Pulalon, a former MILF field commander.

Pulalon was the second village chief murdered in North Cotabato over the past five days.

The evacuees, mostly women and children, are now housed at a multipurpose building in Barangay Nas.

Mayor Romeo Arania said the armed men took Pulalon's mobile phone and .45 cal. pistol. They chanted "mission accomplished" after killing Pulalon.

The victim had just finished dinner in nearby Mudsing where his wife Pia is the village chair.

Quoting witnesses' accounts, Arania said Pulalon was watching a billiards game when three men approached him and opened fire.

Supt. Chino Mamburam, Midsayap police chief, said the victim and his assailants might have had a misunderstanding in the past. He did not elaborate.

According to MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu, Pulalon had still sympathized with the MILF cause despite his surrender in the late 1990s.

He and his militiamen were involved in previous misunderstandings with other armed groups operating in villages of Midsayap.

Four days earlier, unidentified men shot dead Kadtura Lumaig, of Barangay Kabasalan in Pikit town.

Police said Lumaig had just emerged from the town's public market and was about to board his motorcycle when he was shot.

Gov. Emmanuel Piñol has directed the Pikit and Midsayap police to speed up the investigation, identify the suspects and file charges against them in court.

Kabalu said the killing of Pulalon could have been an offshoot of a long-standing feud with armed groups in the border areas of Midsayap in North Cotabato and Datu Piang in Maguindanao.

Kabalu said the MILF leadership had sent emissaries to the villages "to pacify warring leaders."

At about 6 a.m. yesterday, about 40 armed men believed to be led by Commander Samal Masgal, attacked Tugal.

Two persons, identified as Amida Ungkad who is six months pregnant, and Uspo Pato, were wounded.

Soldiers of the Army's 38th Infantry Battalion are pursuing Commander Masgal, a renegade MILF fighter, and about 50 followers.

Gunfight broke out at about 8 a.m. as the armed men approached the marshland of Maguindanao.

Speaking over radio station dxMS, Kabalu instructed MILF fighters in the area not to get involved in the skirmishes to avoid clashes with government forces.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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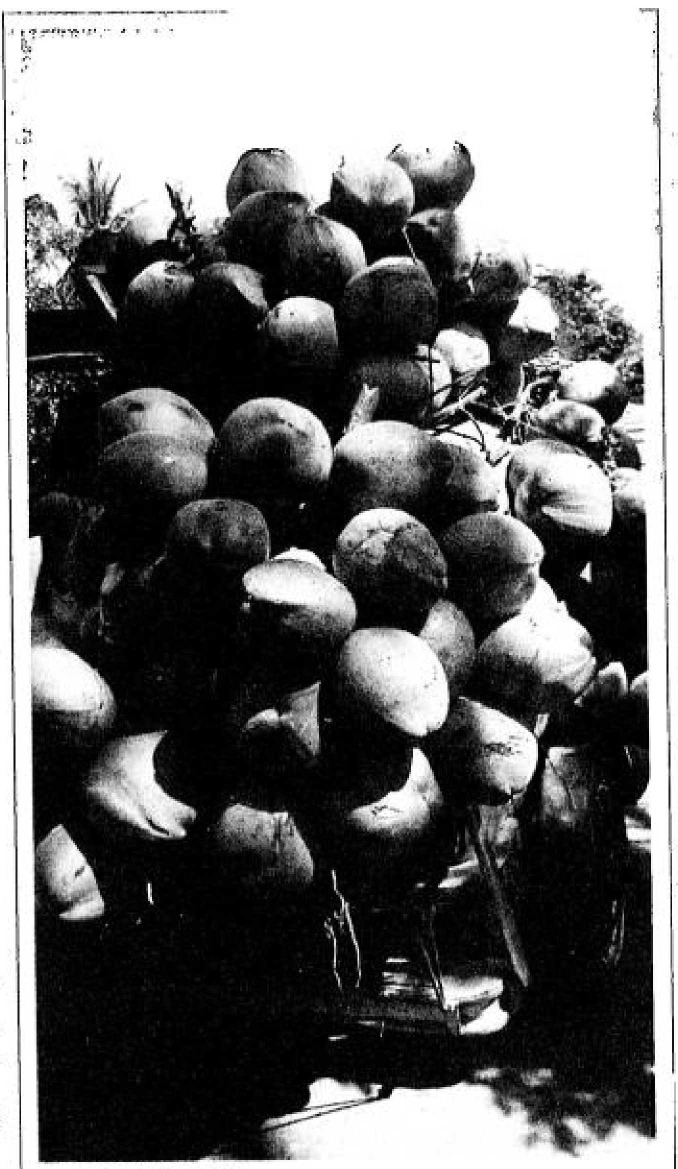
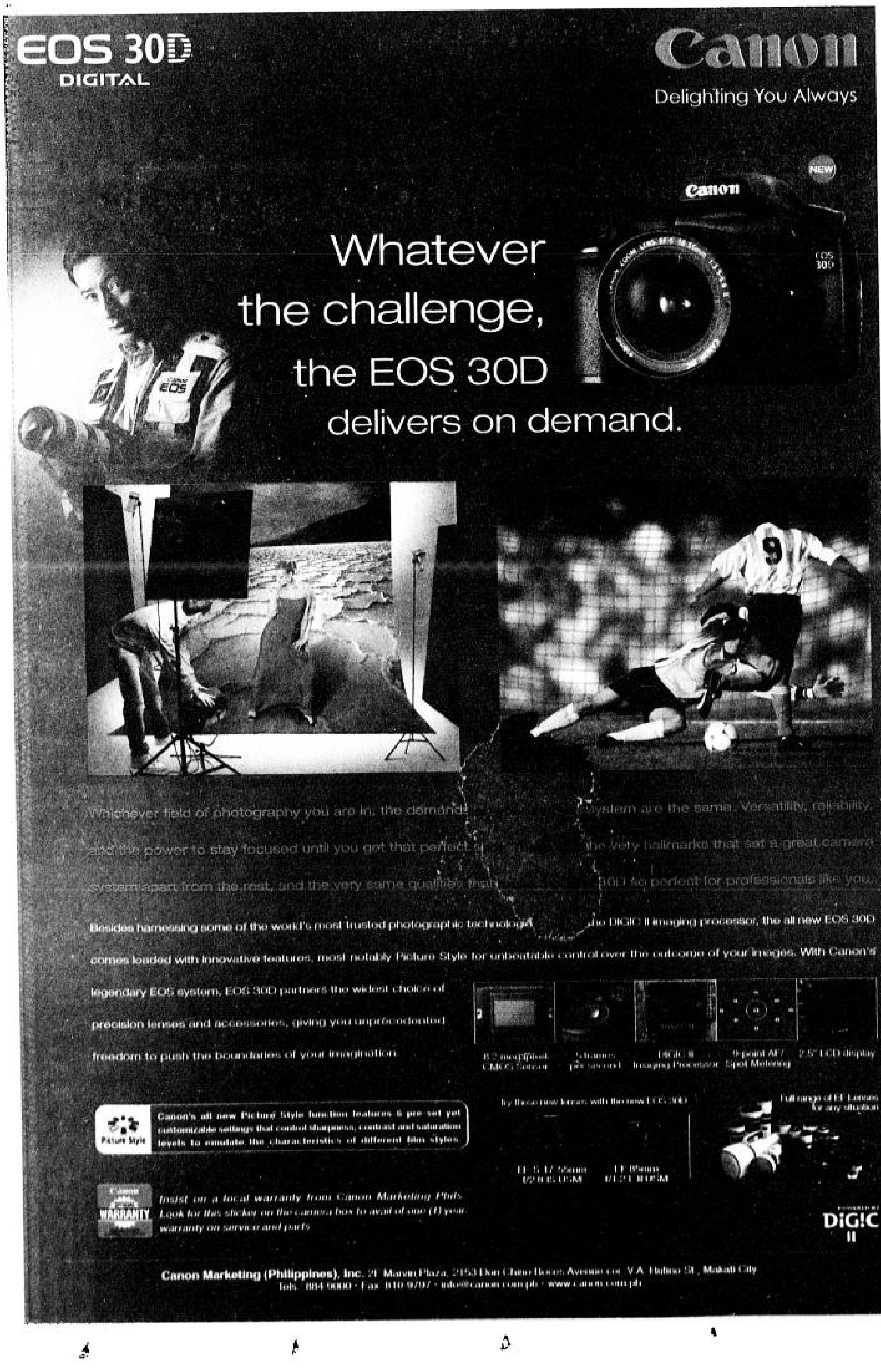


SUMMER BREW MELVIN GASCON/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
An all but broken tricycle transports coconuts to Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya to markets that sell "buko" juice, a favorite drink of motorists during the hot, dry months.



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The new EOS 30D, Canon's versatile digital SLR camera

SINGAPORE, - Canon recently announced the release of the new EOS 30D, a highly versatile 8.2-megapixel digital SLR that is the widely anticipated successor to the Canon EOS 20D. Incorporating many of the features that made the original so successful, the Canon EOS 30D has been updated with a timely technology refresh and enhancements to many features. Developed as an all-rounded solution for professional digital photographers, such as studio or press photographers, and advanced amateurs looking to upgrade to a more powerful digital SLR, the Canon EOS 30D is suitable for a wide variety of shooting situations.

The Canon EOS 30D features an 8.2-megapixel CMOS sensor, Canon's advanced DIGIC II imaging processor and an optical low pass filter in a 3-layer configuration for superb, professional-quality imaging. Other features have either been upgraded or improved, including the tougher, more durable shutter that is now rated to 100,000 cycles with a shutter lag time of only 65 msec. The Canon EOS 30D is encased in a durable magnesium alloy body that ensures it withstands even the most robust field use.

Canon EOS is trusted by professionals over the world and is the reputable leader in digital photography and imaging. Canon is the No. 1 brand for digital SLR, being the originator of numerous breakthrough technologies. Photographers will appreciate and value how the complete EOS system of lenses and accessories expand their imaging options, covering every conceivable requirement and meeting their every needs.

Superb Images & Fast Camera Operations

The second-generation, APS-C size, 8.2-Megapixel CMOS sensor, developed and manufactured by Canon, provides 8.2 million effective pixels (3,520 horizontal x 2,342 vertical pixels). It delivers high-quality images as noise reduction circuitry is incorporated directly on the CMOS sensor for noise-free data output. On longer exposures where there is greater likelihood of electronic noise, a settable automatic noise reduction function ensures clean, sharp night shots. Wide range of ISO speed of 100-1600 is extendable to 3200 available for shooting under different light sensitivity.

Canon's proprietary DIGIC II imaging processor enables ultra high-speed processing and employs original Canon algorithms to produce crisp, high-resolution images with natural, lifelike colours and rich gradations of shade. In addition, DIGIC II features faster processing times, which in turn, translates to nearly instantaneous start-up times of 0.15 seconds, high continuous shooting speed of 5 fps (with a new second option of 3 fps for longer continuous shooting) and faster burst frame rate of up to 11 frames (RAW Type) and 30 frames (JPEG Type-Large/Fine). EOS 30D is highly efficient in terms of energy consumption, thus allowing it to function for longer and snap more images on a single battery charge.

User-requested Enhancements

In response to feedback from users of previous Canon EOS digital SLRs, a number of improvements have been incorporated into the Canon EOS 30D. A long anticipated spot-metering function is now available after improvements to the optical engine and the EOS 30D features 4 metering modes: Evaluative, Partial, Centre-weighted average, and Spot-metering. To increase its flexibility, finer ISO adjustments are now possible to suit fluctuating shooting conditions-ISO adjustments can now be made in either 1/3-stop or 1/2-stop increments. A high precision 9-point AF function with f/5.6 cross-shaped sensors and high-precision AF at f/2.8 (horizontal sensors) ensures rapidly taken snapshots remain sharply focussed for professional applications.

Image playback functions have also been upgraded in the Canon EOS 30D. Users can check their images using the 2.5" TFT screen with greater viewing angle. The enhanced info screen allows users to access important image information like file size, file format and even an RGB histogram. In addition to that, a full range of custom functions are available for easy customisation.

Picture Style

The Picture Style function simulates different types of film, allowing the photographer to achieve the optimum image quality under specific shooting conditions. Picture Style can be adjusted to six different modes including: Standard, Portrait, Landscape, Neutral, Faithful, and Monochrome. Preset Picture Styles image settings offer distinctly different colour response, similar to how different types of film achieve different effects with adjustable sharpness, contrasts, colour tone and colour saturation.

Release of Two Exciting New Lenses

Canon is widely recognised as a leading manufacturer of photographic equipment with over 70 years of legacy. As such, users of the Canon EOS 30D can look forward to expanding their creative options with the full EOS system of lenses and accessories, as it uses the EF mount.

In conjunction with its latest digital SLR release, Canon has released two new high performance lenses. The long awaited EF 85mm/f1.2 L II USM is a medium telephoto lens targeted at professionals and advanced amateur users looking for faster auto-focus speeds. This lens features 1.8x faster auto-focus, a circular aperture and provides distance information. Part of Canon's premium "L" series, the EF 85mm/f1.2 L II USM guarantees superb image quality.

The other lens released is the EF-S17-55mm/f2.8 IS USM, a large-aperture standard zoom lens that is also targeted at professionals and advanced amateurs. The large aperture minimises blurring combined with high-speed shutter, and is particularly effective for low-level light shooting and soft-focus shots. The incorporated Image Stabiliser (IS) operates at an equivalent of 3 shutter speed increments and effectively counteracts camera shake. The f/2.8-compatible sensor allows extremely precise auto focusing.

Printing & Connectivity

The Canon EOS 30D is PictBridge-compatible for camera-direct printing and features USB 2.0 Hi-Speed connectivity for faster file transfers. When used with a compatible Canon PictBridge printer, a full range of enhanced PictBridge functions become available such as 35-image contact sheet index printing; Exif information printing; Face-brightener function, support of additional paper sizes and many more. Trimming function is also available to make fine adjustments to size of the trimming frame. For accurate printouts, EOS 30D also comes with the ability to print using the camera's colour characteristics with any auto correction feature by the printer.

ADVT.

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Floreño G. Solmirano**

Tutor-parents, top pupils share honors

By **Job B. Belen**
Tiwi, Albay

OUTSTANDING PUPILS WERE NOT THE ONLY ones who were given recognition when public elementary schools in Tiwi town in Albay held their graduation rites early this month.

Parents, who served as reading tutors to Grade 1 pupils, also went onstage to be honored for their participation in a reading proficiency program "Sa Pagbasa, May Pag-asa" (In Reading, There Is Hope).

The local school board, headed by Mayor Jaime Villanueva, initiated the program at the onset of school year 2005-06.

Certificates were given to the volunteer parents for the vital role they performed in the successful implementation of the maiden program, according to Joselina Florin, a retired schools district supervisor who was named project coordinator.

Volunteers

Hilda Competente, 33, a municipal employee, was one of those who tutored 10 pupils of Section 4 at the Cale Elementary School.

She had taught "mostly repeaters and slow learners," from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

"At least I was able to make use of my profession," said Competente, who took an Education course in college. Her child is enrolled in Grade 2 at the same school.

She said she was happy to be part of the school's teaching staff. Teaching is an obligation to her pupils because she's also a parent, she said.

Shalie Coralde, 32, of Barangay Naga, tutored four pupils of Section 2 at the Naga Elementary School, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., every Thursday.

A casual employee of the municipal government and graduate of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Coralde devoted extra time to teach before fetching her child who was in Section 1.

"I find my teaching stint difficult as it is not within my line of profession. Later, I learned to enjoy it even if we were not given compensation for our services," she said.

Independent readers

A total of 110 parents, most of them college graduates, passed the screening for the novel reading program. They underwent seminars and training, said local schools district supervisor Evelyn Umali.

They served the schools near their residences, teaching during "vacant" periods, such as recess, lunch break or after classes.

"Some of them share 30 minutes a day or one hour a week to tutor a group of three to five pupils," Umali said.

Florin, Umali's colleague and partner in the project, said that since the tutoring sessions began five months ago, the Grade 1 pupils had shown improvement in reading proficiency.

Before the start of the school year in June last year, 1,781 Grade 1 pupils were considered nonreaders. By March 10, the figure dropped to only 202, Florin said.

PARENTS attend the "Magura Na, Maestra Pa" program for volunteer reading tutors in Tiwi, Albay. JOB B. BELEN

A total of 1,128 (63 percent of the original number) became independent readers, 173 were "instructional readers," and 278 were on the "frustration level."

"Instructional readers are those who can read upon the direction of the teachers, while those in the frustration level can read but have no comprehension," said Florin.

School board

The reading program was spurred by the municipality's efforts to reconstitute its local school board (LSB).

To the current eight voting members, eight more "non-voting" members were added to form the expanded local school board (ELSB).

Under the Local Government Code of 1990 or Republic Act No. 7160, the budget requirements of public schools within the municipality are handled by the LSB. The mayor and the Department of Education's schools district supervisor serve as co-chairs.

Last year, Mayor Villanueva approved the ELSB to include representatives from the Liga ng mga Barangay, Unocal Philippines Inc., Parish Social Action Commission (PSAC) of the San Lorenzo de Martyrs Parish, National Power Corp., DepEd Secondary Education, and the religious, media and academic sectors.

Villanueva believed that the collaborative efforts were essential in upgrading the literacy of public schoolchildren in the town.

Last year, only 200 of the more than 800 examinees qualified for first year in the public high school, he noted.

"The test showed that the competency of the high school freshmen was comparable only to a Grade 4 pupil." Villanueva said.

It also correlated the dismal performance of the examinees to their low scores in Reading and English.

"Independent readers or those who can understand what they read [comprised] ... less than 20 percent," the mayor said.

Resources

After the creation of the ELSB, the municipal government held a total of 23 meetings. Two public consultations were held in March and July last year, followed by an "education summit" on Aug. 8.

As a result of the series of conferences, the board crafted a five-year education reform plan that set the stage for the innovative and pioneering reading project.

The local education specialists said they applied the "Synergeia" principle to see improvements in reading comprehension in the basic education curriculum.

"This simply means that the community members are committed to helping each other and combining all of their resources to ensure the smooth flow and success of the reading scheme," said Florin.

In September, the program kicked off with a series of training sessions sponsored by the ELSB, including a three-day training for Grade 1 teachers and school heads, and an English proficiency test administered to Grade 1 teachers.

Workbooks

All school principals in the district were sent for training.

Unocal, which operates and maintains the town's geothermal energy resource, committed itself to put in P1.1 million to the program, while the local government contributed P400,000 from its annual budget.

The PSAC pledged to take care of the disbursements and operating expenses.

The board allocated funds for the reproduction of English and Reading workbooks adapted from the Negros Occidental Schools Division. A royalty fee of P8 was paid for each workbook, intended for a 1:1 distribution ratio to the pupils.

Parent-tutors have been appointed in every school for the nonreaders in the "Magurang na Maestra" (Parents as Teachers) component of the reading program.

The other parents were trained to become home tutors so they could follow up the reading lessons of their children in class.

The program is now in full swing in the 23 elementary schools in Tiwi's 25 villages and there is no stopping the "synergy" harnessed from each and every community member.

In the coming years, Villanueva has vowed to put up village reading centers, especially for teenagers.

Colombia mission still fresh to Tabaco priest

By **Gil Francis G. Arevalo**
Tabaco City

FOR ALMOST 25 YEARS, HE HAD WORKED AS A missionary in Colombia, one of the first two Filipino—and Asian—priests assigned by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) to the South American country during its most troubled times.

But Fr. Noel Rebancos, who is turning 55 this year, had to come back home in Tabaco City in Albay, not only to be with his ailing parents, other relatives and friends, but also to spend his remaining years of service to preach the Gospel among the youth.

Rebancos was appointed chaplain of the Divine Word College of Legazpi City early this year.

It was not very easy for him to leave Colombia after performing most of his priestly duties in two rural areas there. He was chosen, along with fellow Bicolano priest Armando Escurel of Gubat, Sorsogon, to go to Bogota, the capital, on Aug. 15, 1980. Other priests headed for Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Ecuador and Panama.

Assimilation

At first, Rebancos feared that Roman Catholic Latin Americans would find it difficult to accept an Asian priest. But with his knowledge of their language and with their warm hospitality and religiosity, he easily blended in the community. Instantly, he regarded the place as an extended home.

"Somehow I felt like I was in my own country, for people there have the same passion to love God and are very warm to visitors and neighbors. It was funny, though, for I was always mistaken for a Chinese," he recalled.

During his early years in Bogota, Rebancos said he was shocked at the "culture of death" in Colombia, which was then swept by political unrest.

It was the period of drug cartels and armed revolution. Political killings and uprisings were everywhere, Rebancos said, and the Church and its followers were under extreme threat.

"My main mission in the rural areas of Bogota and the neighboring province of Medellin was to preach the beauty of the culture of life and living for Christ. I admit that I feared also for my life," the priest confessed.

Rebancos said it was traumatic for him to witness scenes, like scattered bones or body parts in the streets—and of course, the corpses of children killed by land mines and caught in the crossfire between the government and militia forces.

"I thought they would kill us. But amid the culture of fear and death, many Colombians still believed in the value of life and that gave me more hope to continue inspiring the people to proclaim life in the face of near death," Rebancos said.

Amid the strife, he was homesick, too, he said. But he wholeheartedly accepted the fact that it would not be that easy to leave his parish for, he said, the people badly needed his courage and faith.

Preaching

Rebancos said it would not be very easy for him to start his new mission. He said he had to rediscover the Filipino culture so he could effectively help and guide the youth.

"But one thing never changed though—I have always had the Filipino's spirituality and faith in God, which is the very noble characteristic we have that the world continuously look up to," he said.

Born on Dec. 22, 1951, the workaholic priest said he never dreamt to become a priest or be chosen to go to troubled Colombia in the early '80s.

He said he wanted to become a doctor. He was a *sacristan* (altar boy) in their parish in Barangay San Antonio and attended high school at the St. Gregory the Great Seminary in Barangay Panal. But he really never thought these would lead to priesthood.

The calling came after two years in college, when he was inspired by the SVD's philosophy on the image of a priest as the "main instrument in spreading the word of God, for the world is their parish."

Calling all Fisheries Professionals:

You are invited to attend and actively participate in the **National Discussion Forum on Fisheries Professionalization** to be held on **April 21, 2006 from 8:00 am- 12 pm at the *Ang Bahay ng Alumni*, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City.**

Highlights:

- Fisheries licensure
- Country's vision on professionalizing fisheries
- Implications of the draft bill, *"The Philippine Fisheries Profession Act of 2006"*

Resource Speakers: Members of the Professional Regulatory Board of Fisheries
Organizer: UP Aquaculture Society, Inc.
Cooperating Agencies: BFAR-Fisheries Resource Management Project (FRMP) and DA-Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR)

For further information, contact
Merlina Andalecio (Iloilo: Fax/phone: 033- 3159030;
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Ligaya Santos (Manila: Tel. (02) 928 8505 local 2121)

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AREA COVERAGE/TOWN: Multinational Village, Brgy. San Dionisio, Brgy. San Isidro, Dela Cruz Cpd., Fortunata Village, Garden City Village, San Antonio Valley 2, 4, 6, 8, 14, Equity Homes, Sandivil, Clarmen Village, BF Homes Phse 3, Filinvest Subd., Evacom Cpd., Gatchalian Village 1, 2, Bernabe Subd., Salvador Subd., PSPQ Village

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PROVINCE

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BULACAN:
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EXPO
YEAR 3
THE BIGGEST BADMINTON SALE
APRIL 22 & 23, 2006 | ROCKWELL TENT

DOJ junks Wang appeal

No reversal for alleged Roldan accomplice

WANG: In hiding after an arrest warrant was issued against her in July 2005. The kidnap victim's family has offered a P250,000 reward for information on her whereabouts.

PDI PHOTO

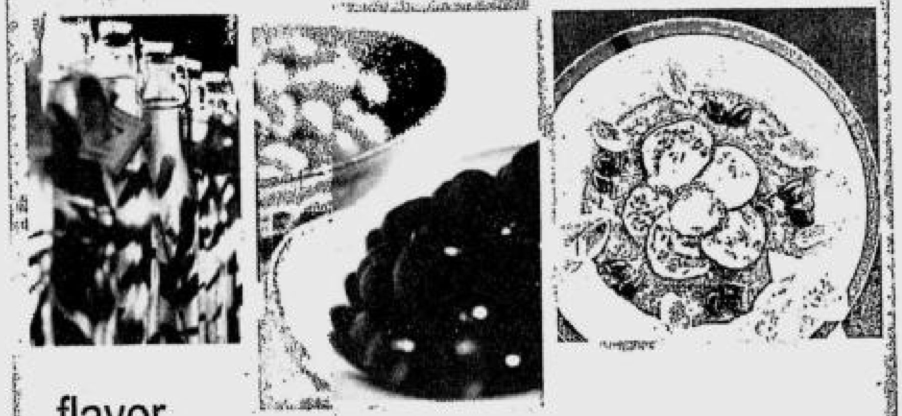
By Armand N. Nocum

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE YESTERDAY threw out an appeal by Suzette Wang, who had been implicated in the alleged kidnapping of a boy last year, to drop the case against her, a move that appears to have sealed her fate as a principal accused in the crime.

In a resolution, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales said that "after having carefully examined the record, we found that the investigating prosecutors committed no reversible error that would justify a reversal of the assailed resolution." Wang had been charged with the kidnapping of a three-year-old Chinese-Filipino boy, along with her alleged boyfriend, former Rep. Dennis Roldan (Mitchell Gumabao in real life), and for demanding P250 million for the victim's freedom. Wang had claimed the evidence against her was weak.

The boy was abducted in February last year while on his way to school. He was rescued by a Presidential Anti-Crime Emergency Response team after 11 days of captivity .

Also facing charges were alleged accomplices, Octavio Garces, Romeo Orcajada; Rowena Prado, Noel San Andres, Alberto Pagdanganan and Adrian Domingo.



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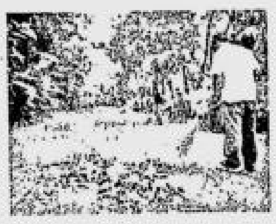
WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Taguig mayor orders closure of videoke bars** /A18
- **Manila cops learn art of interview** /A18



- **What's in store for Earth Day** /A18

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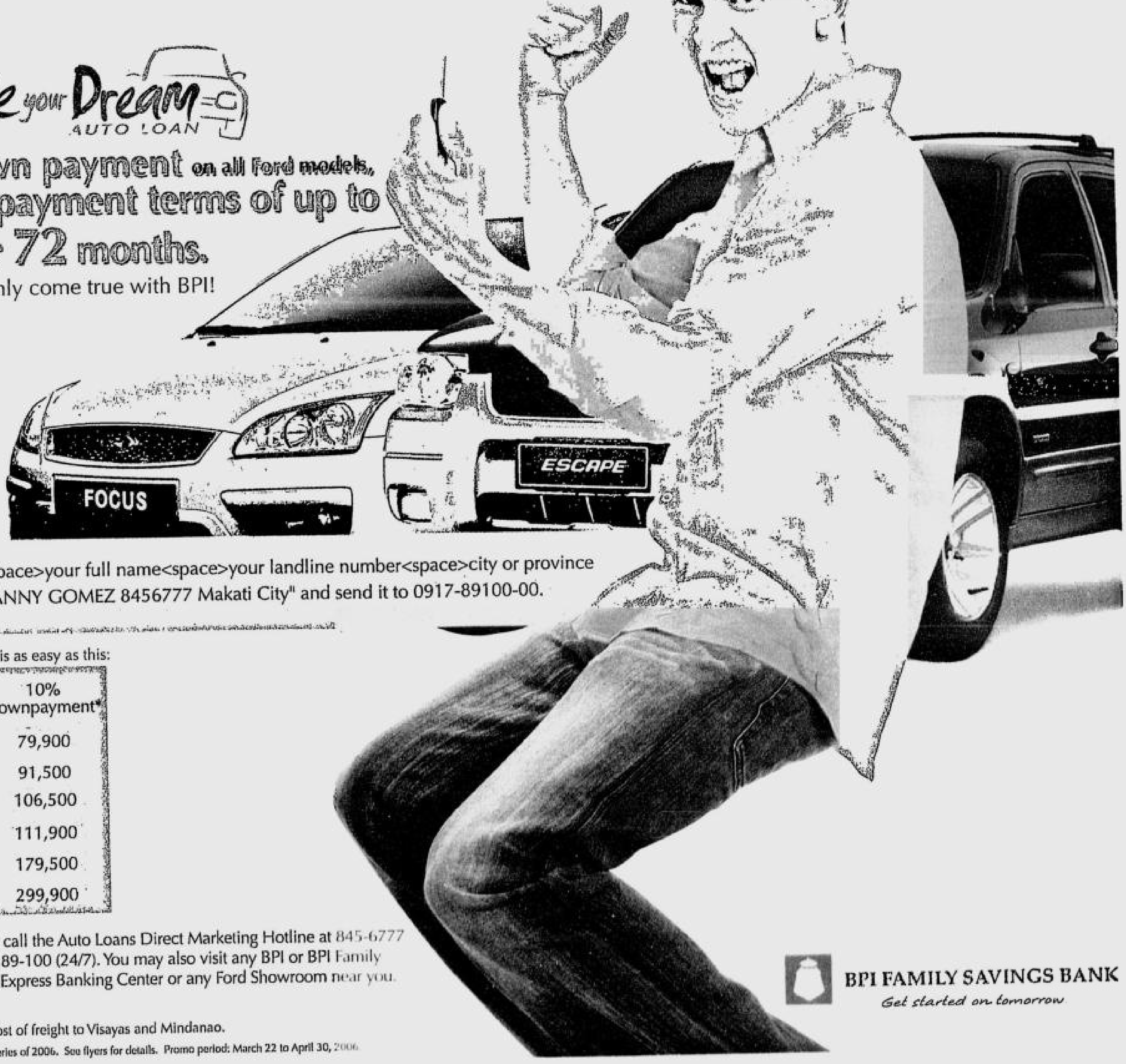

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METROBRIEFS

Seminar for cops

A ONE-DAY seminar will be held this Saturday at the Manila Police Academy to improve the communication skills of policemen and boost their image. "Most policemen are sadly stereotyped as inarticulate," said lawyer Geronimo Sy, chair of the Manila Jaycees Training Institute which will conduct the seminar. "With higher interpersonal skills, the policemen could be more effective in getting justice done," he added. A total of 40 district and station police officials will attend the seminar, titled "Crisis Management and Media Relations: How to do it with Flying Colors," where they will be taught basic mass communication concepts and public speaking skills. "The seminar is important because law enforcers are regularly featured on television and in newspapers as part of their daily work in providing immediate and solid statements to the public," Laurence Ching, Jaycees committee chair said. "Manila policemen should develop their skills in crisis management and media relations to prevent them from being misquoted or misunderstood during interviews," he added.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Borje writes '30'

FORMER political writer David (Dave) Borje, a war veteran who survived the infamous Death March, died Monday. He was 87. Borje, who covered Congress and Malacañang during his more than 40 years as a reporter in various news organizations, died in his home in Makati. He is survived by his wife Felipa; children Elvie, Faith and Ruben Manacop; Abilie and Dave Jr.; Mario and Carol; Dario and Evelyn; grandchildren Samantah, Alexa, Patricia, Joshua, Patrick and Jullia. His remains lie at the Central United Methodist church on T.M. Kalaw Street, Manila. Interment is on Sunday, April 23, at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat after the necrological services at 2 p.m.

24 videoke bars padlocked in Taguig

TREE POWER
A Hyundai Grace van crumpled like a toy car after part of an old acacia tree fell on it in front of the Ninoy Aquino Sports Stadium in Vito Cruz, Manila. No one was hurt as the van was empty.
REM ZAMORA

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE POLICE CLOSED DOWN 24 videoke bars in Taguig City on Monday night for operating without permits.

City police chief Supt. Alfred Corpuz and his men served closure orders on the owners of the bars after Mayor Freddie Tinga received complaints from residents who lived near the establishments.

According to the complaints, the bars, located in Barangays Western Bicutan and Maharlika, were also allegedly used as fronts for prostitution.

Corpuz said signs were put up outside the videoke bars to inform the public that the establishments were closed for violating tax laws or Republic Act 7160.

"The operation is (also) part of the anti-crime prevention program of the city government and police as we intensify our peace and order campaign in the city," the police official said in a statement.

He added that based on their records, crimes like homicide and physical injuries often occurred after or during drinking sprees in pubs and other nightspots.

Tinga, meanwhile, warned of more closures after a check on the status of all nightspots in the city revealed that many were operating without the necessary permits.

Two-day fair set in QC to celebrate Earth Day

A FAIR, "SAMU'T SARI 2006," will be held on April 21-22 at the National Ecology Center on East Avenue, Quezon City to mark Earth Day.

The two-day event will feature stalls stacked with healthy food, eco-friendly products, information on green technologies, Filipino inventions, eco-seminars and earth-friendly demonstrations. Visitors can also use the four-hectare mini park's picnic groves. Meanwhile, The Restoration and Development of Natural Resources headed by Leonarda Camacho will also mark Earth Day on Saturday in Malacañang with President Macapagal-Arroyo as guest speaker.

Mother, baby boy killed in Tondo fire

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Jocelyn R. Uy

A WOMAN AND HER 4-MONTH-old baby were killed in a fire that razed a residential area in Tondo, Manila yesterday afternoon.

Arson probers said Daisy Maquisa, 23, and Baby Archie died of suffocation and burns.

Investigation showed that the fire began at 1:16 p.m. in Maquisa's house at 401-C Perla Street, trapping both mother and baby inside.

The fire was put out at 2:27 p.m. Fire probers said the fire affected 23 other houses.

Earlier in the day, another fire razed a three-story house owned by Rey Tan on Geronimo Street, Sampaloc, also in Manila.

Fire officials said the fire began at around 9:45 a.m. at the third floor of the house and was declared under control at 10:17 a.m. Investigators had yet to determine the cause of the fires.

On Tuesday afternoon, a fire broke out in Parañaque City, leaving a man identified as Michael Escobar, with minor injuries.

The fire broke out on the second floor of a two-story commercial-residential building at 628 Quirino Avenue in Barangay Don Galo. The building was owned by Felicita Uy, said fire investigator SF02 Felipe Caguing in his report.

Firemen put out the fire, which began at 5:39 p.m., 30 minutes later, before it could spread to other parts of the building.

Investigators said the fire could have been caused by a fan which overheated.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of South Cotabato
Municipality of Tupi

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Tupi through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers of Heavy Equipment to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Equipment : 1 unit Brand new wheel type Excavator, Air con cab and Computerized panel board

Brief Description : Specifications

Engine: 100-110 HP@2200 RPM, direct injection, water cooled, turbo charged, 4 cylinder
Bucket capacity : 0.9-1.0 cu.m.
Min. Arm Length (Run): 2.1 m.
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Max. Digging Reach: 7.5 – 8.5 m
Max. Digging Depth: 4.5 – 5.0 m
Max. Digging Height: 8.5 – 9.0 m
Bucket Digging Force: 8,000 – 9,000 kgs.
Arm Crowd Force: 6,500 – 7,500 kgs.
Wheel Base: 2.5 – 2.8 m.
Tires: 8 pcs. 10 x 20, 14 ply rating
Travel Speed (Max.): 30 KPH
With: Front dozer blade, Rear outrigger, Standard tools & operation manuals
A.B.C : P11,500,000.00

Prospective bidders should have key personnel and available spare parts listed in the Eligibility forms available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use nondiscretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars related to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provision of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Schedule of Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) activities are as follows.

1. Receipt from prospective bidders of letter of intent (LOI) including application for eligibility.	May 2, 2006
2. Issuance of eligibility requirements	May 2, 2006
3. Receipt of eligibility requirements	May 8, 2006
4. Notice of results of eligibility check	May 15, 2006
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 22, 2006
6. Pre-bid conference	May 22, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	May 29, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders eligibility forms at Municipal Hall upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable fee of P150.00 to the Office of the Municipal Treasurer. Prospective bidders shall submit the eligibility requirements at the said address. They may also obtain results of the eligibility check at the same address.

The BAC will issue bidding documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible upon payment of non-refundable amount of P5,000 to the Office of the Municipal Treasurer.

The Municipality of Tupi assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses occurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) EUGENIO S. JUELE, JR.
Municipal Engineer
BAC Chairman

(PDI–April 20 & 27, 2006)

Of thieves and welshers

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

FORMER PRESIDENT ERAP TURNED 69 yesterday.

At the rate the ousted Chief Executive had abused his body (drinking, sexual or gambling binges that lasted into the wee hours of the morning), he should consider himself lucky that he's still up and about.

His remaining days on earth can be considered a bonus.

* * *

Here's a piece of unsolicited advice to Sen. Jinggoy Estrada: Stop abusing your body the way your father did his.

The young Estrada should know his father Erap has a stronger constitution than he.

Jinggoy's weak body has resulted in his collapsing due to exhaustion during graduation rites in a university in Northern Luzon where he was guest of honor.

According to persons who know Jinggoy, he frequently drinks and gambles with his buddies. His unhealthy ways have affected his work at the Senate.

That's why he looks like a *kabayong puyat* (a horse that lacks sleep) every time he's featured on TV.

Baka di ka tumagal, Mr. Senator, if you don't mend your ways.

* * *

Dante Jimenez, chair of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, says many victims or relatives of victims of heinous crimes threaten to employ "judicial shortcuts" by having the perpetrators killed inside the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa.

This was their reaction to the mass commutation to life imprisonment of prisoners scheduled for lethal injection.

Vendetta killings inside the national penitentiary would be difficult under Corrections director Vicente Vinarao and NBP Supt. Juanito Leopando. The two know NBP residents inside-out.

Vinarao is a two-term director of the Bureau of Corrections (formerly Bureau of Prisons) while Leopando is a career prisons official, having started as a guard.

But given the Filipino's lack of faith in the country's judicial system, vendetta killings outside prison walls will surely go with President Macapagal-Arroyo's orders practically abolishing the death penalty.

Extra-judicial executions—called "salvaging" in police parlance—of hardened and unremorseful criminals will multiply.

Filipinos have a penchant for taking the law into their hands. Look at the people of the cities of Davao and Cebu who rejoice at every death of a criminal at the hands of vigilantes.

The President has only worsened the crime situation with her controversial order.

* * *

The government's "study now, pay later" plan for poor students has been scrapped because its beneficiaries don't pay when they've found work after graduation.

So, what else is new? It just buttresses my argument in this space (April 13) that Filipinos don't pay their debts.

Ask the banks that lend money. Ask the Indian money-lenders who have a hard time collecting from debtors. Ask people who lend money to their neighbors who came begging for a loan but who cannot be located on the due date of payment.

We're a nation full of *manunuba* (welshers).

And thieves, too. If you leave your bag in a taxicab, expect it to be returned to you in a one in a million chance.

There are very, very few honest cabbies and other people who serve the public.

That's why when a toilet cleaner returns a bag left by a passenger inside an airport toilet, he or she becomes a hero and an instant celebrity. This goes to show that we lack honesty in this country.

We're a nation of *manunuba*.

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Call for Submission of Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals

The Department of Education is inviting interested publishers to submit copies of camera-ready materials for their textbooks (TXs) and accompanying teacher's manuals (TMs) for English Grades 1 to 6 and First to Fourth Year high school intended for use in public schools nationwide starting SY 2007-2008.

This call does not constitute a pre-bid content evaluation. DepED intends to buy the best sets of materials that pass content evaluation with a reasonable price offer for the royalty fee or copyright authorization fee to print and distribute to all public schools nationwide.

All submitted materials will undergo an evaluation process in four levels:

- Level 1 to test completeness of coverage, organization, and internal consistency;
- Level 2 to check accuracy of facts and information, integrity of concepts and sequence of learning concepts;
- Level 3 to test the appropriateness of the language and visuals used; and
- Level 4 to ensure correct grammar and syntax.

Content evaluation will be on a Pass/Fail basis. Only those that pass content evaluation in the four levels will be considered for ranking. The ranks 1 to 3 titles will be recommended for negotiation for the royalty fee or copyright authorization fee that would allow DepED to print and distribute to all public schools nationwide.

Publishers will pay an evaluation fee of **thirty thousand pesos (P30,000)** for each set of TX and TM for Grades 1 to 2 and **forty thousand pesos (P40,000)** for each set for Grades 3 to 6 and First to Fourth Year. The evaluation fees, which will be used to defray expenses for service fees, transportation, and board and lodging of evaluators, committee members, and facilitators, may be paid either in cash or manager's check addressed to DepED-IMCS Acct. No. LBP 0672-1027-66. Payments must be made at the DepED Cash Division, 1st Floor, Rizal Building II, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

The English TXs and TMs should be submitted to the Dep-ED-Procurement Service (PS) at 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City starting **May 8, 2006 but not later than May 12, 2006.**

In order to get a soft copy of the Learning Competencies and the Textbook Call Guidelines, bring a blank compact disk to the DepED-IMCS starting April 20, 2006. All inquiries pertaining to this call may be addressed to DepED-IMCS staff at tel. nos. 634-1054 or 631-9294.

For your information and guidance.

(Sgd.) Atty. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA
Assistant Secretary & BAC Chairman

(PDI–April 20 & 27, 2006)

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Call for Submission of Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals

The Department of Education is inviting interested publishers to submit copies of camera-ready materials of their textbooks and accompanying teacher's manuals for **Filipino** Grades 1 to 6 and First to Fourth Year high school intended for use in public schools nationwide starting SY 2008-2009.

All submitted materials will undergo an evaluation process in four levels:

- Level 1 to test completeness of coverage, organization, and internal consistency;
- Level 2 to check accuracy of facts and information, integrity of concepts, and sequence of learning concepts;
- Level 3 to test the appropriateness of the language and visuals used; and
- Level 4 to ensure correct grammar and syntax

The evaluation result will either be for Major Revision or Minor Revision. Content evaluation will NOT be on a Pass/Fail basis and therefore does not constitute pre qualification.

Publishers will pay an evaluation fee of **thirty thousand pesos (P30,000)** for each set of textbook and teacher's manual for Grades 1 to 2 and **forty thousand pesos (P40,000)** for each set of textbook and teacher's manual for Grades 3 to 6 and First to Fourth Year. The evaluation fees, which will be used to defray expenses for service fees, transportation, and board and lodging of evaluators, may be paid either in cash or manager's check addressed to DepED-IMCS Acct. No. LBP 0672-1027-66. Payments must be made at the DepED Cash Division, 1st Floor, Rizal Building II, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

Publishers will be given a copy of the recommendations of the evaluators at the different levels which will serve as basis for revising the materials prior to submission for bidding. All materials – even those requiring major revisions – may be submitted when bids are tendered as scheduled. Content evaluation under the bidding will then determine the completeness and accuracy of the implementation of the revisions for those recommended for minor revisions. For those recommended for major revisions, the materials will undergo the four levels of evaluation.

The materials for Filipino should be submitted to the DepEd-Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS), 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City starting **September 11, 2006 but not later than September 15, 2006.**

In order to get a soft copy of the Learning Competencies and the Textbook Call Guidelines, bring a blank compact disk to the DepEd-IMCS starting May 8, 2006. For more information, please contact Ms. Daisy O. Santos or Ms. Nonie Barraquias at 634-1054 or 631-9294.

For your information and guidance.

(Sgd.) ATTY. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA
Assistant Secretary and BAC Chair

(PDI–April 20 & 23, 2006)

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Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City
Telefax : 636-6543
Direct Line: 633-93-43
Trunk Line: 632-13-61 locals 2094
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

April 18, 2006

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Request for Proposals (RFP) to undertake the following packages:

Package 1 Revision of SEDP Textbooks and Teacher's Manual for the Non-Core Subjects in Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) and Values Education (VE)
Package 2 Development of Teacher's Professional Development Manuals (TPDM)

1. The Republic of the Philippines through the Department of Education (DepED) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the costs of the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP), and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contracts for the above mentioned packages.
2. The DepED now invites your firm to submit Technical and Financial Proposals to provide the services required in the Terms of Reference of the RFP for the said Packages 1 and 2.
3. The negotiation shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures described in this RFP. The RFP includes the following documents:
   Section 1 – Letter of Invitation
   Section 2 – Information to Consultants
   Section 3 – Technical Proposal – Standard Forms
   Section 4 – Financial Proposal – Standard Forms
   Section 5 – Terms of Reference
   Section 6 – Standard Form of Contract
4. Please submit in writing on or before April 28, 2006 your expression of interest to accept the project to the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), c/o Procurement Service, Rm. 508, 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City. Interested service providers may secure the complete set of RFP from DepED Procurement Service at same address upon payment of Php 200.00 in cash.
5. A Pre-Proposal Conference shall be held on May 8, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the BSE Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Bonifacio Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.
6. Submission of Technical and Financial Proposals shall be on or before May 31, 2006, 5:00 p.m. to the address indicated in paragraph no. 4.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,
(Sgd.) ATTY. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA
Assistant Secretary and BAC Chairperson

(PDI – April 20 & 27, 2006)

Hamas-led government fights for survival

JERUSALEM—JUST THREE weeks in office, the Hamas-led Palestinian government is fighting for survival and seeking a coalition with other factions to shore up support, warning the administration's collapse could spark violence.

Some Palestinian officials and analysts predict the government might fold within months if international political isolation and financial pressures persist.

Those pressures are likely to escalate after the new government defended a Palestinian suicide bombing in the Israeli city of Tel Aviv on Monday that killed nine people.

Hamas is sworn to Israel's destruction but has largely abided by a year-old ceasefire.

"I can't say there are plans to face the situation but the collapse of the Palestinian Authority would mean uncontrolled chaos and violence," Nayef al-Rajoub, Hamas minister of Religious Affairs, told Reuters.

Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh on Friday said the consequences of bringing down the government would be grave, but added the administration would not fall.

Hamas is fighting challenges on all fronts.

It has inherited $1.3 billion in debt. Israel has cut off $55 million in monthly tax transfers while the United States, Europe and other countries have cut aid to the government unless it recognises the Jewish state and disarms.

Protests over unpaid government salaries are festering.

Banks are refusing to deal with the Palestinian Authority, fearing lawsuits by the United States which has prohibited any commercial dealings with the Hamas government.

Some analysts said Hamas had two options to halt a humanitarian crisis: recognize Israel or step aside and allow President Mahmoud Abbas, a moderate who favors a two-state solution to the conflict, to form a new government.

"Hamas is not officially admitting its failure ... but it has discovered it can't run things alone and to preempt a popular backlash, it is appealing to others to share this responsibility," said Palestinian analyst Mehdi Abdel-Hadi.

On Sunday, Hamas held talks with a dozen rival Palestinian factions to try to persuade them to join the government.

All factions of the umbrella Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had previously refused to join, partly due to disputes over political programs.

Abdel-Hadi said to form a coalition with PLO groups, Hamas would have to recognize the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians and accept a two-state solution.

Hamas insists it will not bow to pressure to recognize Israel and renounce violence.

Israel's intensified artillery barrages of Gaza, in response to militant rocket fire, and Monday's suicide bombing by the Islamic Jihad group, have added to the dilemmas for Hamas.

Hamas has said it would not arrest militants carrying out assaults against Israel. But it has come in for criticism from some groups for halting its own attacks.

Abbas's condemnation of the suicide bombing and Hamas's defense was also likely to speed a confrontation between the president and the Hamas cabinet, analysts said.

In a speech on Friday, Haniyeh accused Abbas of stripping him of his powers.

"If this situation continues, I believe things are moving towards a confrontation unless Hamas retracts," said Imad Fallouji, a former minister and former Hamas official.

Political analyst Basem Izbidi questioned whether Hamas could govern beyond a couple of months. The Hamas finance minister has already warned of economic collapse within months unless aid flows back into empty Palestinian coffers.

"Without salaries people may stop going to work, institutions could collapse and services stop. People could go to the streets in rebellion. It could be violent," Izbidi said.

Hamas has been taken aback by world reaction toward their assumption of power after trouncing Abbas's Fatah faction in January elections. Some Muslim countries have promised to make up the aid shortfall, but amounts pledged have been small.

"We were surprised by the European position in particular, we thought they would give us a chance and then deal with us," one senior Hamas official told Reuters.

Hamas has hinted at accepting a two-state solution, although Arab diplomats and analysts say Hamas could not make such a decision without causing splits within the militant group itself and its mother movement, the Muslim Brotherhood. *Reuters*

Film recreates flight of hijacked 9/11 plane

NEW YORK—A FILM ABOUT THE HIJACKED plane that crashed in Pennsylvania has raised questions about whether Americans are ready for Hollywood's take on the Sept. 11 attacks, but some relatives of those who died support "United 93."

The film, which premieres at the Tribeca Film Festival next week, recreates the flight in actual time, from takeoff to the hijacking to the crash. It is an intense re-enactment and even the trailer prompted one New York City theater to pull the advertisement because of negative reactions from customers.

But Peggy Beamer, whose son Todd Beamer died on United flight 93, said that while she found the movie difficult to watch, it was an important story to tell.

"I think the timing is very good," she said on Tuesday at a New York press event for the Universal Pictures film. "If it had been one or two years after Sept. 11, it would have been much too difficult."

Gordon Felt, who lost his brother Edward, said the movie studio had promised to donate 10 percent of box office takings from the opening weekend to a fund to create a memorial for those who died on that flight.

"I don't think they're profiteering on our story," he said, adding that the business of movie companies was to make money.

The producers spent hours talking to the families to produce research the actors used to improvise scenes on the plane during the hijack.

Director Paul Greengrass created a mock-up of the plane and filmed the actors improvising what they imagined might have happened, guided by phone conversations that many passengers made and by transcripts of flight recorders.

The film starts with a voice in Arabic reading from the Koran and the first few minutes show the hijackers praying in a hotel room before they go to the airport.

The tension builds slowly, with long, drawn-out scenes of mundane preparations for the flight—passengers calling home, flight attendants chatting, fuel being loaded on the plane.

The story of United 93 is punctuated by the narrative of what is happening at air traffic control centers tracking United 93 and the other hijacked planes—two of which crashed into the World Trade Center and another into the Pentagon.

In the final scene the passengers try to overcome the hijackers and the plane hurtles downwards.

"To me the job of this film is to ... create a responsible, mature, reasonable narrative of those events to see what it tells us about where we are today," said Greengrass, director of the action movie "The Bourne Supremacy" and "Bloody Sunday," about one of the most controversial events in Northern Ireland's troubles. *Reuters*

Floods threaten 160,000 in southeastern Europe

BELGRADE—A SWOLLEN TRIBUTARY of the River Danube rose to record levels in Hungary and Serbia on Tuesday, threatening at least 160,000 people and 50,000 homes as southeastern Europe battled massive floods.

Emergency crews scrambled to bolster the banks of the Tisza River that flows into Serbia from Hungary after it reached its highest levels in parts of the two countries already hit by the flooding.

Further downstream in Romania, the rising Danube forced authorities to evacuate more than 4,700 people, mainly in the southern towns of Calarasi and Fetesti.

In neighboring Bulgaria, thousands of volunteers joined army troops to strengthen embankments along the surging Danube with sandbags, as the government came under political pressure for its handling of the disaster.

The situation was expected to worsen across the Balkans within hours, with heavy rainfall forecast later Tuesday or Wednesday, adding to the melting snow which has contributed to the flooding.

The Tisza River rose to a record 9.8 meters in the Hungarian town of Szeged, and was moving south towards the already bursting Danube, which flows on through Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria. *AFP*

Another baby for Brooke Shields

LOS ANGELES—ACTRESS Brooke Shields, who publicly battled Tom Cruise over post-partum depression, had a baby girl Tuesday, her publicist said, just as Cruise welcomed his own daughter into the world.

BROOKE Shields and her husband Chris Henchy AP

Shields, 40, gave birth to her second child with her husband Chris Henchy, 42, Pat Kingsley told AFP.

"Brooke Shields gave birth this morning in Los Angeles to baby daughter, Grier Hammond Henchy, who weighed 3.18 kg and was 50.8 cm long," Kingsley said. "All are doing beautifully." Shields gave birth just as Cruise's fiancee Katie Holmes delivered a baby girl with almost identical dimensions just a few miles from Shields in Los Angeles.

The two movie stars last year engaged in an acrimonious public battle through the US media over Shields's use of anti-depressants to tackle a severe bout of post-natal depression following the 2003 birth of her daughter Rowan.

In an interview, 43-year-old Cruise, an ardent member of the Church of Scientology, criticized Shields' use of an anti-depressant to get through her depression.

Sultry beauty Shields shot to fame as the child star of Louis Malle's 1978 drama "Pretty Baby", and followed that with the sexy 1980 hit "The Blue Lagoon." *AFP*

It's a girl for TomKat

LOS ANGELES—THE TOMKITten has arrived.

KATIE Holmes and Tom Cruise REUTERS

Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes, the public lovebirds dubbed TomKat by the media, had a baby girl Tuesday, said Cruise spokesperson Arnold Robinson.

The baby, named Suri, weighed 3.4 kg and measured 50.8 cm long, he said.

"Both mother and daughter are doing well," Robinson said in a prepared statement.

The name Suri has its origins in Hebrew, meaning "princess," or in Persian, meaning "red rose," the statement said. The baby was born in Los Angeles but the exact location was not disclosed.

It's the first child for Holmes, 27. Cruise, 43, has an adopted daughter and son from his marriage to Nicole Kidman.

Details surrounding the birth, which was planned under the tenets of the Church of Scientology as a silent procedure, weren't disclosed.

About a dozen reporters and photographers stood outside the Beverly Hills home where Cruise and Holmes live. Security officers inside the compound videotaped the journalists. *AP*

Michael Jackson's new album

LONDON—MICHAEL JACKSON, seeking to revive his singing career after his acquittal on sex-abuse charges, has teamed up with a label in Bahrain to record a new album set for release next year, the label said on Tuesday.

JACKSON REUTERS

A statement released on behalf of Two Seas Records said British music industry executive Guy Holmes had been named CEO of a newly formed joint venture between Jackson and Bahrain royal family member Abdulla Hamad Al-Khalifa.

Holmes, who now plans to divide his time between London and Bahrain, will oversee the making of Jackson's first studio album since "Invincible" in 2001, and also manage the star's business interests, the statement added.

"I am incredibly excited about my new venture, and I am enjoying being back in the studio making music," Jackson said in the statement.

The 47-year-old singer, one of the top-selling pop stars of all time, now lives in the Gulf state of Bahrain. *Reuters*

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PROGRAM

DAY 1 (April 20, Thursday)
1:00 pm to 2:00 pm – Role of Radio in the Advertising Media Mix
2:00 pm to 3:00 pm – Harnessing the Power of Radio

DAY 2 (April 21, Friday)
12:30 pm to 1:15 pm – The Print Advertising Process By: Mr. Gary Libby, VP for IT and Prepress, Phil. Daily Inquirer
1:15 pm to 2:00 pm – What Print Can Deliver for Clients; Successful Companies Which Grew Substantially Because of Print By: Ms. Hermie de Leon, President & CEO, Mediawise
2:00 pm to 2:45 pm – The Power or Unique Properties of Print By: Liezl Maralag, Managing Director, Starcom

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Bush won't rule out Iran nuke strike

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES ON TUESday failed to secure international support for targeted sanctions against Iran and President George W. Bush refused to rule out nuclear strikes if diplomacy failed to curb the Islamic Republic's atomic ambitions.

Bush said he would discuss Iran's nuclear activities with China's President Hu Jintao, who has been cool toward sanctions, during his US visit this week.

Asked if his options included planning for a nuclear strike, Bush said: "All options are on the table. We want to solve this issue diplomatically and we're working hard to do so."

But a meeting of major powers in Moscow ended without consensus despite strong US pressure for international sanctions. Washington believes Iran is trying to build bombs but Tehran says it is only developing nuclear energy.

The meeting of deputy foreign ministers of the UN Security Council's permanent members—The United States, Britain, France, China and Russia—plus Germany, was called after Tehran declared last week that it had enriched uranium and was aiming for industrial-scale production.

The No. 3 US State Department official, Nicholas Burns, argued that sanctions should be imposed on Iran, but Russia and China are resisting and the parties came to no agreement, said State Department spokesperson Tom Casey in Washington.

"Burns raised the issue of some form of sanctions and there will need to be further discussions on this," he said after being briefed by US officials about the meeting.

The United States, which already enforces its own sweeping sanctions on Iran, wants the Security Council to be ready for strong diplomatic action, including measures such as a freeze on assets and visa curbs on Iranian officials.

Tehran had vowed to continue its pursuit of nuclear technology, whatever the meeting's outcome.

"Whatever the result of this meeting might be, Iran will not abandon its rights," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hamid Reza Asefi said before the meeting ended.

State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack stressed that the goal of the Moscow meeting was to make preparations for decisions to be taken in various capitals.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is due to report at the end of the month on whether Iran is complying with UN demands that it halt uranium enrichment.

BUSH AP

Iran's defiance of world pressure to halt its program drove oil prices to a record high of $72.64 a barrel, raising fears of a cut in supplies from the world's fourth biggest crude exporter.

Speculation about a US attack has mounted since a report in New Yorker magazine said this month the Bush administration was considering the option of using tactical nuclear weapons to knock out Iran's underground nuclear sites.

China, which sent an envoy to Iran to try to defuse the standoff, repeated a call for a negotiated solution. "We hope all sides will maintain restraint and flexibility," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Qin Gang said in Beijing.

Russia restated its opposition to punitive action. "We are convinced that neither the sanctions route nor the use of force route will lead to a solution of this problem," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mikhail Kamynin, according to an Itar-Tass news agency report.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov urged Iran to suspend its research and development efforts to enrich uranium in a telephone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Motaki on Monday, Interfax said.

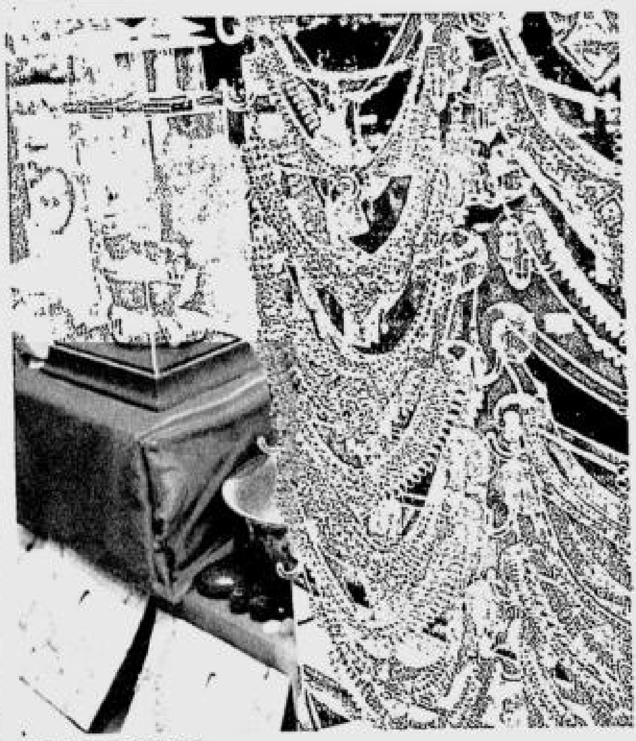
US Sen. Joe Lieberman, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, told the Jerusalem Post that the United States probably could not destroy Iran's nuclear program but could attempt to set it back by strikes as a last resort.

"I think the only justifiable use of military power would be an attempt to deter the development of their nuclear program if we felt there was no other way to do it," he said.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, speaking at an annual military parade, said the army was ready to defend the nation. "It will cut off the hands of any aggressors and will make any aggressor regret it," he declared.

While refusing to drop its right to enrich uranium for peaceful use, Iran has offered to work with the IAEA.

The UN nuclear watchdog says it has been unable to verify that Iran's nuclear program is purely civilian but has found no hard proof of efforts to build atomic weapons. *Reuters*



RECORD HIGH

Gold necklaces are displayed in a glass showcase at a jewelry shop in Singapore April 19. The price of gold reached its highest level in more than 25 years. AFP

No one's indispensable but I won't quit—Rumsfeld

WASHINGTON—DEFENSE SECretary Donald Rumsfeld, boosted by another strong endorsement from President George W. Bush, said on Tuesday no one is indispensable but he is not considering quitting in the face of criticism from a handful of retired generals.

Rumsfeld, an architect of the 3-year-old Iraq war who has been a lightning rod for criticism, has faced an unusual spate of calls for his resignation from six retired generals. They accused him of disregarding military advice, ruling by intimidation and making strategic mistakes.

"The president knows, as I know, that there are no indispensable men," Rumsfeld said. "Graveyards of the world are filled with 'indispensable' people." Critics have accused him of bullying senior officers and contemptuously rejecting their advice, such as deploying more troops in 2003 to occupy Iraq.

Asked whether he was arrogant and autocratic as critics claim, Rumsfeld said in his typically blunt way, "You know me." He twice offered Bush his resignation in 2004 amid the Abu Ghraib prison scandal.

But Rumsfeld he said he would not consider resigning now to ease the burden on the president and Republicans during a congressional election year. "He (Bush) knows that I serve at his pleasure and that's that."

Asked why he would offer to resign after Abu Ghraib but not now, Rumsfeld replied, "Oh, just call it idiosyncratic."

RUMSFELD REUTERS

At a Rose Garden ceremony, Bush lauded Rumsfeld as he did in a written statement last Friday.

"Don Rumsfeld is doing a fine job," Bush said. "He's not only transforming the military, he's fighting a war on terror—he's helping us fight a war on terror. I have strong confidence in Don Rumsfeld.

"I hear the voices. And I read the front page. And I know the speculation. But I'm the decider. And I decide what is best. And what's best is for Don Rumsfeld to remain as the secretary of defense," Bush said.

Rumsfeld doubted there was broad dissatisfaction in the military ranks over his leadership. Speaking at Rumsfeld's side, Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, said he sees no such discontent. *Reuters*

Chernobyl death toll could be higher, says Greenpeace

LONDON—ENVIRONMENTAL group Greenpeace said on Tuesday the eventual death toll from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster could be far higher than official estimates, with up to 93,000 cancer deaths attributable to the accident.

Based on research by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the report said that of the 2 billion people globally affected by the Chernobyl fallout, 270,000 would develop cancers as a result, of which 93,000 would prove fatal.

The Chernobyl Forum, a group of eight UN agencies, and governments of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, has estimated an eventual death toll of only a few thousand as a result of the April 26, 1986 explosion at the power plant in the Ukrainian town of Chernobyl. The blast sent a plume of radioactive dust across northern and western Europe and as far as the eastern United States.

Greenpeace anti-nuclear campaigner Ivan Blokov accused the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN nuclear watchdog, of "whitewashing the impacts of the most serious nuclear accident in human history."

In Vienna, an IAEA official rejected the accusation, saying it was responsible in the Forum only for an environmental impact study while the casualty figures were drawn up by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Gregory Haertl, a spokesperson for Geneva-based WHO, said it stood by its figures. He said the predicted eventual number of extra deaths in the hardest-hit areas of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia was estimated to be 4,000.

Another 5,000 deaths were predicted among those who had been living in less-contaminated zones of the three countries at the time of the disaster, he added.

Haertl also noted that WHO had not done a European-wide study and said Greenpeace's figures appeared to assume one.

The Greenpeace report said that a further 200,000 people in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus could have died as a result of medical conditions—such as cardiovascular diseases—attributable to the disaster, but that there was no accepted methodology to calculate deaths from such diseases. *Reuters*

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GAB meeting fetes Pacman

REIGNING WORLD BOXING COUNCIL INTERnational super featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao will be declared Boxer of the Year tonight during the gala night and awarding ceremonies of the ongoing first GAB Philippine Boxing Convention at the Hotel Hyatt and Casino Manila.

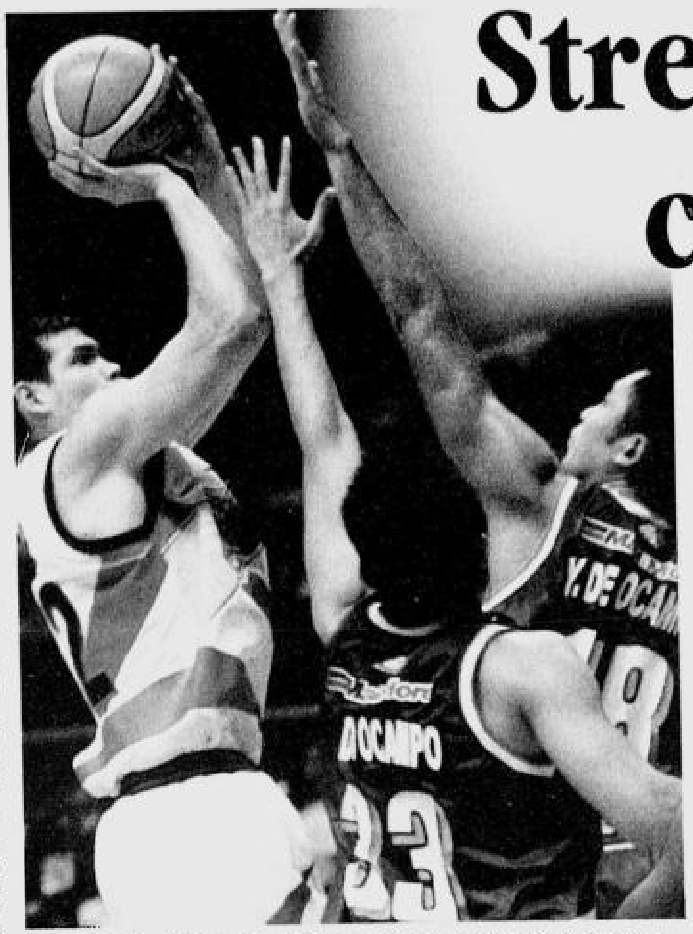
President Macapagal-Arroyo will bestow the national award to Pacquiao and other former world boxing champions as guest and speaker of the special affair.

The event is under the supervision of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and spearheaded by Games and Amusement Board chair Eric R. Buhain.

"This is history in the making for our pro sporting industry in the country, much more in pro boxing," said Buhain, adding that the event is being held for the first time since the establishment of the GAB as an agency tasked to regulate and supervise the conduct of all professional sports in the country.

"The launching of this Presidential priority program is aimed at creating sound policies and avenues for the common welfare and protection of Filipino fighters and future generations of aspiring pro boxers," Buhain noted.

A special boxing event will also take place at the Rajah Sulaiman in Malate tomorrow dubbed as the "Rumble at the Bay" with Paba super featherweight champion Jun Paderna clashing with Kiatkrerin Kularbdang of Thailand in the mainer. *Marc Anthony Reyes*



DANNY Seigel of San Miguel fires over brothers Yance and Ranidel De Ocampo.

ERIK ARAZAS

Streaking Beermen clobber Express

By June Navarro

SAN MIGUEL BEER KEPT THE LONGEST streak of the season alive by walloping Air21, 117-100, last night in the Gran Matador-PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Danny Seigle was unstoppable from all angles while Danny Ildefonso and Dorian Peña toyed with the Express frontline as the Beermen zoomed to their sixth straight win.

"We really haven't thought about it," said San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico after the Beermen got back at the Express, who booted them out in the wild card phase of the Fiesta Cup last conference.

The early ouster not only aborted San Miguel's bid to defend its title but also ended the Beermen's streak of 24 conferences since 1996 where they always advanced past the preliminary round.

"I didn't use that as a motivational tool. The players just took it upon themselves," said Uichico.

Seigle typified the Beermen's fire by scoring nine of his game-high 26 points in a third-quarter assault that opened an 85-74 spread for the SMB entering the final period.

Ildefonso also had nine of his 23 while Pena converted a couple of three-point plays in that span to finish with 22 points and 12 rebounds.

Dondon Hontiveros added 16 points and five assists while Brandon Cablay posted his first double figure in a San Miguel uniform by drilling in 14 points, 12 of them in the last quarter.

"I had this fear of getting rusty after we took a three-day break," said Uichico. "I guess they proved me wrong today."

The Beermen fortified their stranglehold of the lead after picking up win No. 8 in 10 outings while sending the Express to a third straight defeat, their seventh overall in the same number of games.

Turnovers actually hastened the downfall of the Express although they hammered the Beermen off the boards, 58-41. The Express committed 29 errors compared with San Miguel's 13.

Wynne Arboleda led four other Express in double figures with 23 points on top of 12 rebounds, seven assists and two steals.

Renren Ritualo scattered 17 points, Nino Cañaleta and Ranidel De Ocampo had 15 each while Ronald Tubid tossed in 12 points.

The scores:

First Game

SAN MIGUEL 117—Seigle 26, Ildefonso 23, Peña, Hontiveros 16, Cablay 14, Racela 4, Noble 4, Kong 2, Lopez 2, Adriano 2, Calagulo 2, Gonzales 0.

AIR21 100—Arboleda 23, Ritualo 17, Canaleta 15, De Ocampo 15, Tubid 15, De Ocampo 9, Telan 7, Se 2, Dacia 0, Bernardo 0, Fran 0.

Quarters: 27-25, 55-47, 85-74, 117-100.

GAMES TOMORROW (Araneta Coliseum)
4:40 p.m.—Sta. Lucia Realty vs Talk N Text
7:35 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Red Bull
GAME SATURDAY
(Capiz Gymnasium, Roxas City, Capiz)
4:40 p.m.—Purefoods vs Alaska

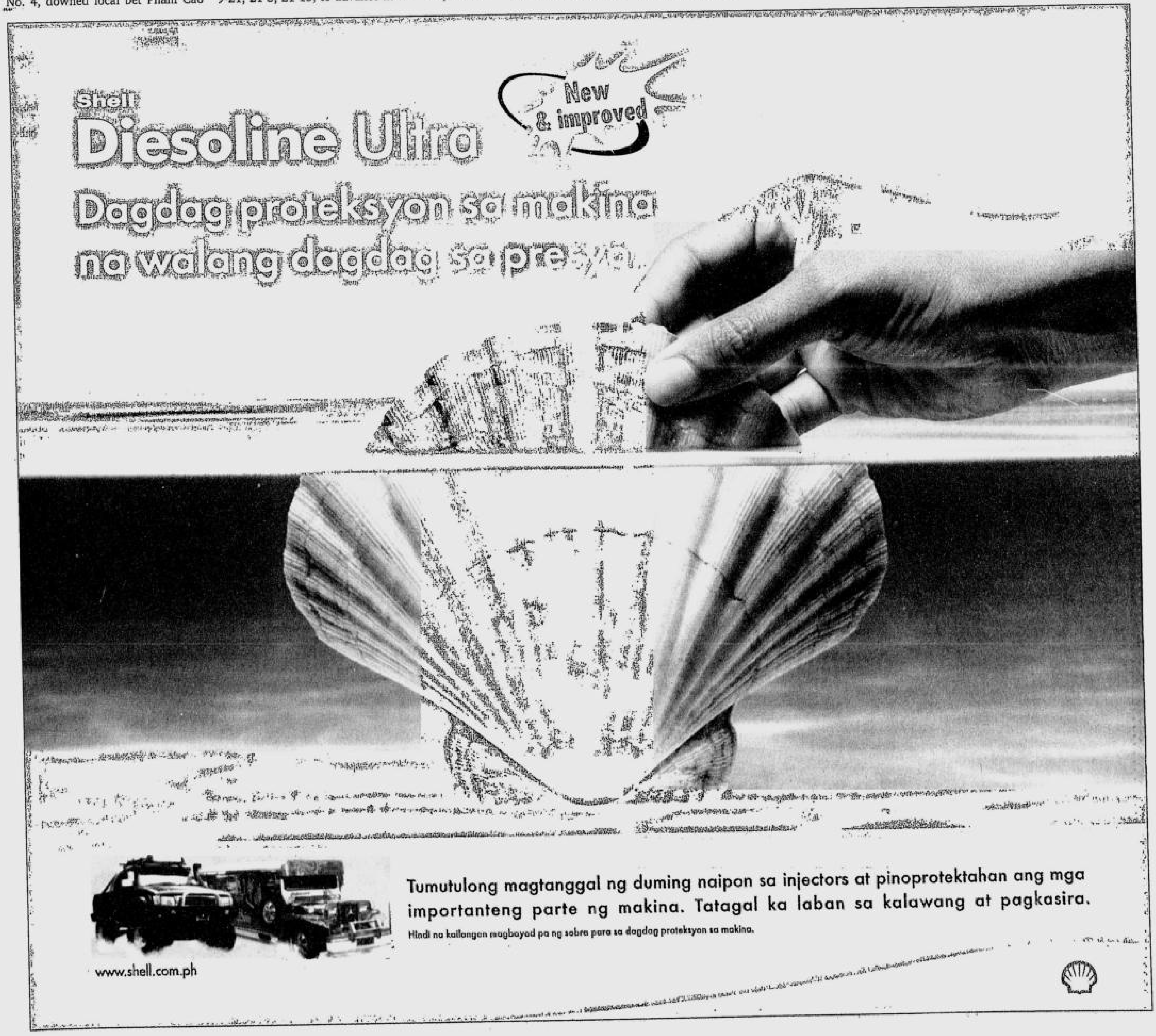
3 RP shuttlers nip Vietnamese foes

THREE PHILIPPINE SHUTTLERS pulled off scrambling wins at the start of the Robot Vietnam Satellite badminton championships Tuesday night at the Phan Dinh Phung Competition Hall in Ho Chi Minh City.

Arolas "Bogs" Amahit, the Filipino No. 4, downed local bet Pham Cao Hieu, 21-17, 21-19, while Mark Natividad and Wilson Frias scored three-set victories over their respective Vietnamese opponents.

Natividad bundled out Nguyen Van Son, 15-21, 21-18, 21-18, while Frias turned back Nguyen Duc Ngoc Trieu, 9-21, 21-3, 21-15, to advance in the tournament.

But 14-year-old JP Babad succumbed to Vietnam's Nguyen Thanh Luan, 21-12, 21-8 and RP No. 3 Jaime Junio dropped a gallant stand against Malaysian Kuann Kam Chung. The Malaysia won, 23-21, 3-21, 21-19. *Marc Anthony Reyes*



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Abdon, Tabuena ahead in Junior World qualifier

TABUENA

JOHN KIER "JIKJIK" ABDON FIRED an eagle-spiked 4-under-par 68 to seize a four-stroke lead over in Class A after the third round yesterday of the Callaway Junior World qualifying tournament of the Samsung Jungolf Tour at the Sherwood Hills course in Trece Martires, Cavite.

Abdon highlighted his round with an eagle 3 on No. 5 that went with three birdies against two bogeys as he wrested control with a 213 aggregate in this 108-hole qualifier backed chiefly by Samsung, Philippine Air Lines and Callaway.

Wolen Superal, Miguel Tabuena, JR Gonzales, Rupert Zaragosa and Shailesh Vasandani also led their divisions in boys' play, the qualifier moves to Canlubang next week for the final 54 holes.

The girls leaders were Bambee dela Paz, Mia Piccio, Regine de Guzman, Princess Superal, Rachita Vasandani, Mia Legaspi and Chloe Reyes.

Other sponsors are Titliest, Mizuno, La Jolla, Taylor Made, Wilson, Ping, Auto Magic, Unilever, MMCI Air Liquid, INQUIRER Golf and Michael Guy.

The third round results:

Class A: Boys-213 John Kier "Jikjik" Abdon 75-70-68, 217 Mico Yee 74-73-70, 222 Miko Alejandro 72-73-77; Girls-234 Bambee dela Paz 77-75-82, 235 Debbie de Villa 81-77-77, 235 Crystal Superal 83-81-71

Class B (13-14): Boys-234 Wolen Superal 74-76-84, 242 Carlos Tinio 81-82-79, 248 Marcel Puyat 79-82-87; Girls-234 Mia Piccio 75-79-80, 234 Regine de Guzman 83-74-77, 235 Cyna Rodriguez 76-75-84

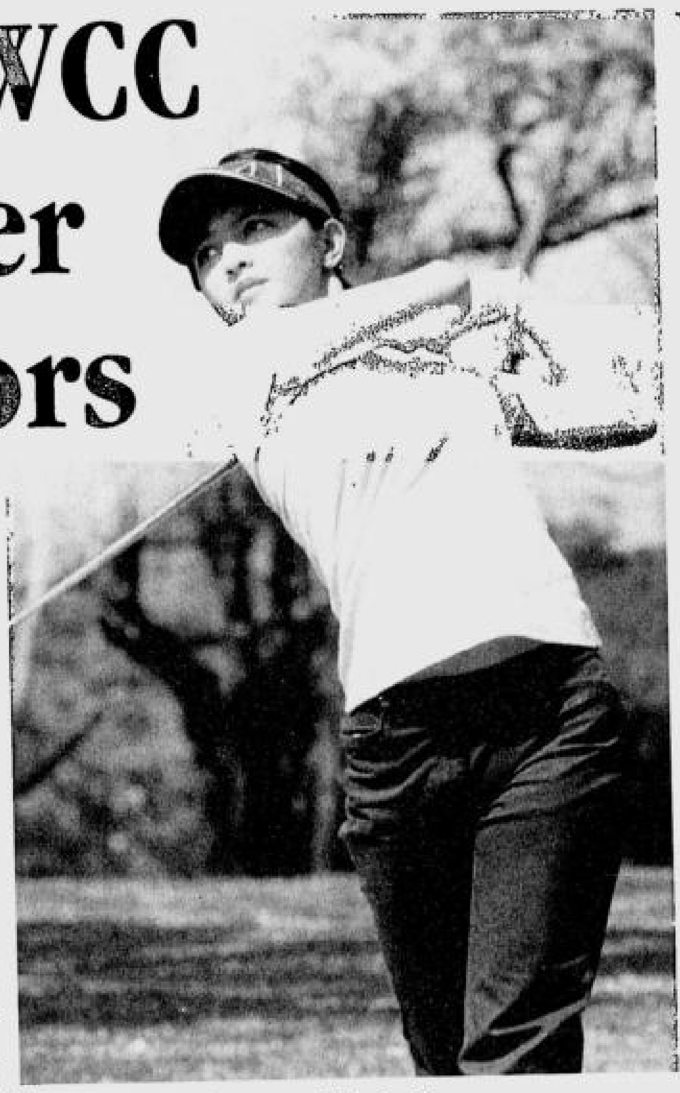
Class C (11-12)- Boys-231 Miguel Tabuena 76-79-76, 233 Remo Fueg 79-76-78, 253 Bino dela Paz 88-80-85; Girls-223 Dottie Ardina 76-71-76, 228 Ma-Ann Legaspi 79-76-73, 238 Katya dela Cruz 73-81-84,

Class D (9-10): Boys- 219 JR Gonzales 69-79-71, 224 AR Ramos 76-76-72, 225 Miggy Yee 76-72-77; Girls-249 Princess Superal 85-81-83, 274 Daniella Uy 86-94-94, 280 Felicia Medalla 96-94-90

Class E: Boys-185 Rupert Zaragosa 65-61-59, 190 Justin Dy 67-63-60, 205 Jelbert Gamolo 66-70-69; Girls: 201-Rachita Vasandani 69-62-70, 201 Mia Legaspi 67-72-62

Class F: Boys-198 Shailesh Vasandani 58-74-66, 219 Ryan Monsalve 78-68-72, 286 Mikael Robles 95-94-97; Girls-256 Chloe Reyes 82-84-90, 260 Kristine Turralba 87-93-80, 285 Ashia Mari Nocum 91-97-97

Agojo cops WCC crown, player of year honors


JAYVIE Agojo makes her presence felt in the US.

FILIPINO FRESHMAN JAYVIE AGOJO CLAIMED LOW INDIVIDUAL honors while helping eighth-ranked Pepperdine University capture its fifth straight West Coast Conference (WCC) women's golf championship Tuesday at the Saddle Creek Golf Course in Copperopolis, California.

The 20-year-old Agojo turned in a 5-over-par 221 for 54 holes to nip teammate and three-time WCC champion Carolina Llano by two and become the fifth straight Pepperdine player to bag the title and be selected Player and Freshman of the Year by the WCC.

All five Pepperdine players actually finished in the Top 10 to help the Waves to an 899 tally and a 25-shot victory over San Francisco.

Santa Clara (952) was third, followed by Gonzaga (973) and Portland (984).

"I am pleased with the result and happy for Jayvie," head coach Laurie Gibbs said. "We played well throughout the tournament and we are looking forward to carrying that momentum into the NCAA Regionals scheduled May 11.

"It is an impressive accomplishment for a freshman to capture individual medalist honors," added Gibbs. "It should provide her with a lot of confidence as she heads into her first NCAA Regionals."

Sophomores Leanne Bowditch and Marina Choi tied for fifth place with 229s while junior Eileen Vargas tallied 234. All five Waves were named All-WCC.

Gibbs was named the conference's Coach of the Year for the second year in a row and seventh time in the last nine years.

The Waves will be making their ninth straight regional championship appearance and 10th overall.

Valley's Tuason Centennial Cup blasts off today

THE FIRST BATCH OF PLAYERS from among the record 840 participants in the seventh Valley Golf and Country Club's annual member-guest tournament tee off today at the championship south and executive courses in Antipolo.

Dubbed as the Don Celso Tuason Centennial Cup, this year's tournament commemorates the 100th birthday celebration of Valley's prime mover and one of its founders.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, a nephew of the tournament honoree, will lead the hitting of the ceremonial balls at 6 a.m. Arroyo is teaming up with Martha Tuason for the 36-hole competition spread out in four days. Also expected on the first tee are cousins Bolo, Emilio, Konkoy, and Butch Tuason as well as Valley president Louie Reyes and organizing committee head Joey Salindong.

The Tuason Centennial Cup, presented by Smart Communications for the second straight year, stakes prizes worth over P5 million with a hole-in-one package that includes a Mitsubishi Lancer, Suzuki APV and Yamaha golf cart.

Raffle prizes totaling P2.5 million topped by a Yamaha golf cart, a Rolex watch, a Mizuno golf set and hybrid clubs, and household appliances will be given away.

The tournament is backed by Armscor, Caltex Phils. Comadore Sports and Leisure, PCSO and Makati Skyline as major sponsors. Premium sponsors are Bristol Myers Squibb, Circula/Macroxam, Citibank N.A., Dental B, DHL/WWW Express, Enriquez Security, GMA 7, Havi Food Services, Oriental Assurance, PNCC, Selecta, Sunbolt, Unilever, Unilab, Wyeth Nutritionals.

Olympiad-bound So joining Dubai tilt

SO

TAGAYTAY CITY—THE YOUNGEST turned out to be the brightest.

Fide Master Wesley So ruled the final playoffs of the National Chess Championship Tuesday, becoming the youngest ever member of the Philippine team to the Chess Olympiad at 12 years old.

So beat National Master John Paul Gomez in the fourth round and then drew with NM Rolando Nolte in the fifth and concluding round to top the six-man playoffs with 3.5 points and earn the last slot for the RP men's team to the biennial event set in Turin, Italy, from May 19 to June 5.

The fourth and last women's team slot went to WIM Beverly Mendoza, who bested WNM Shercila Cua in an extended 5-minute playoffs, 1.5-0.5, at the Sunflower Hotel here.

So, an incoming freshman of St. Francis College System in Bacoor, Cavite, will join seeded Grandmasters Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre and Joey Antonio and outright qualifiers NM Darwin Laylo and FM Oliver Dimakiling in the biennial meet.

Showing the form that made him joint first placer in the 11-12 division of the 2005 World Youth Championships in Belfort, France, So also drew with International Master Petronio Roca, beat NM Mirabeau Maga and drew with NM Roderick Nava, respectively.

So, accompanied by his father William, will leave for Dubai tomorrow to compete in the Dubai Open. Their trip is being supported by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office through director Strike Revilla and Filway Marketing CEO/president Hector "Chito" Tagaysay.

Nava and Nolte fell short of catching up So with 3.0 points each.

Cabanatuan City's Mendoza will join WIM Sheerie Joy Lomibao, WNM Catherine Perena and WNM Sherily Cua in the women's team to the Olympiad where she'll be making her fifth straight appearance.

Both Mendoza and Shercila Cua finished the playoffs, hosted by Tagaytay City Mayor and National Chess Federation of the Philippines secretary general Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino under the helm of NCFP president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay, with 2.0 points. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

SPORTSWATCH

Makati Dasmariñas Rotary golf

THE ROTARY Club of Makati Dasmariñas of R.I. District 3830 will hold its 2nd Annual Cool Dudes and Hot Babes Golf Tournament tomorrow at the Sherwood Hills Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite. Tournament chair and immediate past president Dr. Joji Tan expects more than 100 players to participate. RCMD president lawyer Gilda Lim said the event is held yearly to celebrate the club's achievements in community service and at the same time raise money for the next Rotary year. Tournament tickets are priced at P2,000 each, including the players' green fees, lunch, raffle and giveaways. Major sponsors are San Miguel Corp., Duty Free Phils., Nissan Motors (UN Ave.) and Sherwood Golf and Country Club. Hole-in-one prize is a Nissan Sentra 1.6. For details, contact Dr. Tan at 890-2824.

Gov. Reyes Chess Cup May 5-8

THE COUNTRY'S top players will be competing in the Gov. Joel Reyes Open Chess Championship slated May 5-8 at the Provincial Capitol of Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. Organized by provincial administrator and National Chess Federation of the Philippines vice president lawyer Romeo Seratubias and sponsored by the provincial government of Palawan, the event offers P128,000 in prizes. The champion gets P50,000, the runner-up P30,000, the third placer P20,000, the fourth placer, P10,000 and the fifth placer P8,000. The 6th to 10th placers will receive P2,000 each. NCFP president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. and secretary general and Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino have been invited to grace the opening rites on May 5. For details, contact Carlo Abugado at 0910-6755671 and Roger Seratubias at 0915-7598987 or 0917-3964788. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Arbiters, trainers, coaches seminar

THE CHESSMATES arbiters, trainers and copaches seminar will be held on May 6 to 7 at 9 a.m. at the training hall of the Rizal Technological University, Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City. To grace the opening ceremony are National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay, Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali Gonzalez Jr. and RTU President Dr. Jose Q. Macaballug. Registration fee is P2,000, inclusive of food, participant's bag, t-shirt and other paraphernalia. Facilitators are Dr. Jenny Mayor, 6-time national executive champion, International Arbiter Gene Poliarco, International Master Rodolfo Tan Cardoso, Expedito Bolico Sr. and National Arbiter Jess Bermejo.Contact Dr. Mayor at 704-9775 / 09194782209, engineer Yasay 09183938766,r engineer Winston Pedron 09276345523, Francis Geriane 5415761/ 09169118449, Boyet Tardecilla 09215307050, NM Efren Bagamasbad 09108089996 and Edna Suede at 8705667. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Texas Hold-Em Poker tilt April 22

CASINO Filipino-Angeles prepares to hold the 2nd Texas Hold-Em Poker Tournament on April 22 at the Casino's Sinukwan Lounge. Registration starts at 12 a.m. The event is expected to give thrill and excitement to participants as thousands of pesos in cash and other consolation prizes await 10 winners. In addition, finalists will get a chance to compete for the championship trophy, a gold coin and a souvenir jacket. Buy in and entry fees are P5,000 and P1,000, respectively. For inquiries, call the casino's concierge at (045) 625-7604 or marketing section at (045) 892-5073 to 74 local 218 or 219.

LPC cockfest slates 52 fights

CAVITE and Metro Manila cockers clash in Las Pinas Coliseum's special 3- cock derby featuring 52 fights today. A cash prize of P300,000 is at stake in this event which will be hosted by Angel Tenedero. Entries must be submitted until 2 p.m. Another 3- cock derby fires off at LPC on April 30 with Romy Bustamante of Las Pinas as host. Meanwhile, LPC's regular hackfight schedule is from Monday to Sunday, where a bonus of P20,000 await the first 20 winners. For details, call 873 -1040 and 874 -3910.

Camarines Sur hosts 4-cocker

THE Mandaragat Promotions 4-Cock (Texas) Derby will be held at the Penafrancia Coliseum in Bgy. San Vicente, Milaor, Camarines Sur tomorrow with Thunderbird Multi-Grain Conditioner as main backer. The event stakes a P300,000 guaranteed cash prize. Derby promoter is Rudy Penaredondo (Mandaragat). Contact Vic 0916-6177599 and Danny 0916-6011824.

3 V-League teams make debut today

THE THREE NEW TEAMS IN THE SHAKEY'S V-League get their baptisms of fire early when they all see action at the opening of the fledging volleyball league's second conference Saturday at the Blue Eagle gym.

Philippine Christian University and Adamson tangle in the 3 p.m. contest before Ateneo tests the University of the East's Lady Warriors in the second game at 4:30.

"We're happy to be here in the V-League but we're not just here to play, but also to win," said PCU coach Butch Odron, who steered the Dolphins to the 2003-2004 NCAA titles.

Included in the PCU lineup are guest players Amy Cojuangco and Lani Cervantes, Grace Magtibay, Romalyn Manzano, Arlene Bernardo and libero Jannette Barrera.

Adamson, on the other hand, will lean on the national team mainstays Cherry Rose Macatangay and Rubie de Leon, who will be the guest players for the team that also placed second in the UAAP, the University Games and the Torribios Cup last year.

Macatangay, an Adamson alumna, is one of the country's top spikers, while de Leon, who played college ball for perennial UAAP champion Santo Tomas, is a vaunted setter.

"What I have here is a solid team that can challenge any team for the crown," said Adamson coach Dulce Pante.

Providing support for Macatangay and De Leon are Christine Andave, Rizza Laguiller, Jacklyn So, Pauline Mendoza, Hannah Suarez and libero Donalyn Adajar.

The event is being presented by Shakey's and backed by ABC-5, Mikasa and Accel. The V-League second conference will be played Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. ABC-5 will air the games every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Cognac Monnet (2), Perfect Storm (7), Ops (6), Big Spender (3)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Pretty Pretty Girl (3), Iron Tower (2), Golden Era (9), Bobon Lancer (5), Country Boy (7)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Black Squall (7), Speed King (3), Real Tough (8), Espirikitik (2)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Aryamm (6), Ruah (8), Winter's Fury (8), Conquer D'Sun (2), Angel of Light (4)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Bahrain (3), Terry Toon (5), Suplada/Panibugho (4), Brave Warrior (7), Black Peacock/Golden Majestic (6)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Expediter (7), Power Dance (10), Honoree (11), Ole! Ole! Ole! (3), Look of Love (6).
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Common Goal (4), Brenda Starr (5), Special Science (8), Hale and Hearty (2), Wing Away (9).
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Ingay Ingay (9), Beat D'Heat (5), Rose and Toy (11), Rock Attack Attack (7), American Idol (3), Reign of Roses (1).

UAAP to resume La Salle probe

THE UAAP BOARD WILL START ITS DELIBERAtion on the La Salle eligibility case after the league's fact-finding committee presents its findings and recommendations to school representatives in a board meeting tomorrow.

Sources said league officials have reserved future dates next week in the event that no final decision will be made on the the collegiate scandal involving Archers Mark Benitez and Tim Gatchalian.

The five-man investigating panel said last March that it only needs to "summarize and complete" its report based on interviews from key personalities involved in the controversy.

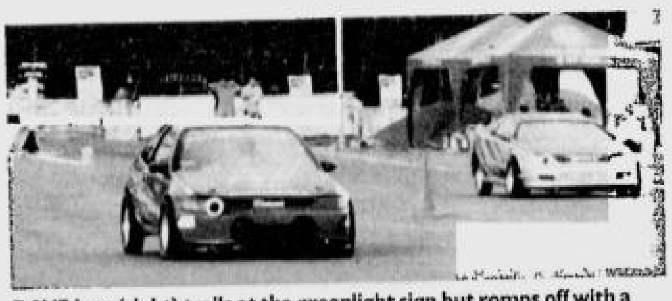
Suspension from the league is among the possible punishment La Salle could face for unwittingly fielding them in the UAAP. Jasmine W. Payo

Santillan stakes OPBF title

REIGNING ORIENTAL AND PACIFIC BOXING Federation welterweight champ and WBC No. 11 Rev Santillan of the Philippines will defend his title today against Japanese Hiroshi Yamaguchi in 12 rounds at the Korakuen Hall in Tokyo, Japan.

The southpaw Santillan (22-2-1, 16 KOs) will risk the belt he regained from Kazuhiko Hidaka last December. Yamaguchi (14-0-1, 10 KOs) has yet to drop a bout since his debut in 2001. Trainer Brix Flores left with Santillan. *Salven Lagumbay*

Jota shatters drag race mark four times


DAVE Jota (right) trails at the greenlight sign but romps off with a new record time of 11.583 seconds to win over Mico Vinadao.

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—Blanche Racing driver Dave Jota shattered his own record four times before bagging the Quick 8 crown recently in the kickoff of the 2006 Red Horse-PCSO National Drag Racing Championship Series at the Drag Strip of the Batangas Racing Circuit.

The 29-year-old Jota broke his three-month record of 11.833 seconds right on his first qualifying run with 11.713 seconds and improved it to 11.666 seconds on his second try.

Just when everybody thought it would be the best he can do, Jota clocked a new record of 11.609 in his first Quick 8 faceoff against Conrado Estrada of Team Ready-Ado Motor. He capped his victory with the new best time of 11.5836 seconds in the finals against Mico Vinadao.

Jota, however, wasn't as lucky in the Pro Class where he was booted out by Giovanni Garcia of W. Autosports in the quarterfinal round.

Winning the other classes were Edel Caraan of Group N, Ian Verdeflor of Good Guys and Bong de la Cruz. Call BRC Operations Manager Rodini Rivera or Nelson Gayola at (632) 817-2241, 729-5365 or fax 815-1241 for details.

Tortillos face Sparks; TeleTech meets Hapee

GAMES TODAY *(Olivarez College Sports Center)*
2 p.m.—TeleTech vs Hapee-PCU
4 p.m.—Granny Goose vs Toyota Otis

IF COACH LOUIE ALAS HAS HIS WAY, there should be no more end-game rallies for the Toyota Otis Sparks.

Thus, the Sparks will try to get off fast and finish strong when they tackle Granny Goose Tortillos in the PBL Unity Cup at 4 p.m. today at the Olivarez College Sports Center in Parañaque.

"We have to play smart basketball from start to finish. We have to start well and not just play catch up," said Alas, noting that the Sparks have been relying on comeback efforts in their last three games.

A key acquisition, though, has buoyed the hopes of the cellar-dwelling TeleTech Titans going into their 2 p.m. date with the Hapee-PCU Teethmasters.

TY Tang, the 5-foot-8 starting point guard of the La Salle Archers, will be suiting up for the Titans starting today.

"He's a fine player, he will be an asset to the team," said coach Jerry Codiñera. "We hope to stop our losing streak with him."

Toyota Otis displayed resiliency after pulling off come-from-behind victories against TeleTech and the league-leading Montana Jewels.

But luck ran out on the Sparks when their rally fell short versus the Magnolia Spinners, 81-77, last Tuesday.

Despite the explosive performance of Fil-Am Joe Devance, the Sparks saw their three-game winning streak end as they fell into a tie with Rain or Shine for second place at 4-2.

The 6-foot-7 Devance delivered 29 points, nine rebounds and three blocks.

Kelvin dela Peña shone in Granny Goose's 62-61 triumph over defending champion Rain or Shine, scoring seven of his 15 points in the fourth quarter, including the game-winner.

The Tortillos seek their fourth win with Dela Pena teaming up with big men JR Quinahan and Alfie Gijaldo. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Tagaytay five wins

Games Today *(C.P. Tinga Gym)*
5 p.m.—Bacchus/Harbour vs Laguna
7 p.m.—Parañaque vs Taguig (Pagadian)
6 p.m.—Iligan vs Pagadian

TAGUIG CITY—BATANG TAGAYtay rode on the steady performance of big men Rodel Mallari and Arden Guiyab to spank Laguna-Sta. Rosa, 82-66, Tuesday night and grab a share of the northern division lead with idle Spring Cooking Oil-Parañaque in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the C.P. Tinga gym here.

With gunner Tito Reyes struggling throughout, Mallari and Guiyab combined for 28 points to power NBC executive vice president and Mayor Bambol Tolentino's Tagaytay bets to their second win in three games.

The Pistons of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro and Sta. Rosa Mayor Joey Katindig suffered their fourth straight loss in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

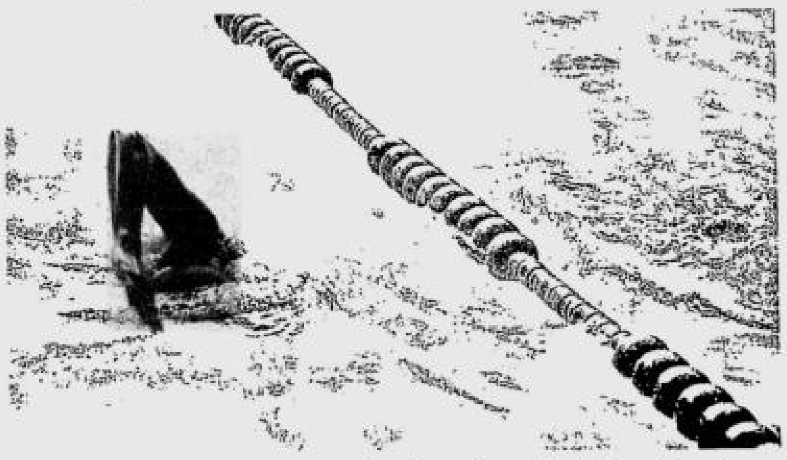
The game was close in the first half, which saw Tagaytay lead by only two.

The scores:

TAGAYTAY 82—Mallari 16, Guiyab 12, Marquez 11, Cenido 9, De Guia 9, Robillos 6, Mendoza 4, Diaz 4, Finuliar 3, Moody 2, Mordeno 2, Reyes 2, Jorge 2

LAGUNA 66—Nuqui 18, Proceso 14, Domingo 12, Alminario 7, Natividad 6, Mamangon 3, Sy 3, Roda 3, Intano 0, Funtillas 0, Baylon 0, Aquino 0

Quarters: 13-12, 34-32, 69-51, 82-66



HEADLESS SWIMMER: An unidentified bet churns the pool in the Pasuc Olympics.

Lasuc bets lead Pasuc

LUZON ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND Universities and Colleges (Lasuc) surged ahead in the first day of the inaugural Philippines Association of State Colleges and Universities (Pasuc) National Olympics at the Marikina Sports Complex Tuesday.

Lasuc dominated the first day of swimming and athletics, grabbing a total of 36 gold 18 silver and 2 bronze medals. Mindanao Association of State Colleges and University Foundation (Mascuf) was at second 6 gold 10 silver and 11 bronze medals, followed behind by Visayas Association of State universities and Colleges (Vasuc) with 0 gold 1 silver and 8 bronze medals.

In athletics, Mascufs Cherrylou Maiinit copped two golds. Maiinit ruled the women's shot put with a heave of 9.89m and then the javelin throw with a heave of 26.48m.

Lasuc found its chest of gold on RTU-based swimmer Reneeza Velayo who reaped three golds.

The inaugural Pasuc Olympics features basketball, volleyball, athletics, swimming, chess, football, baseball, softball, badminton, sepak takraw, taekwondo, tennis, table tennis and boxing.

The saga that is Graham Lim

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

MANY ARE THE CRITICS OF GRAHAM LIM, the embattled secretary general of the expelled-from-the-Olympic movement Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP).

The critics accuse Graham Lim of masterminding the downfall of Philippine basketball on the world stage. And that was because he kept on sending abroad teams that were not worthy of international play.

Well, understand please the nuances of Graham Lim's position.

You are the sec-gen and like most secgens, you have almost complete control of everything.

Graham Lim had the BAP almost by the neck because the then BAP president had puny, if not tiny (pun intended), powers to rule his turf. By choice, I believe. Why, because Tiny Literal had been too ill to perform his duties well as BAP pre-sident. Left with no choice, Tiny had to entrust, wholly, the leadership reins to Graham Lim.

The result was a virtual one-man rule by Graham Lim.

He formed squads that were almost worthy only of joining inter-barangay tournaments. In fact, only when Graham Lim's team was beefed up by Air21 players that that team became truly battle-ready. One such team, with John Ferriols as its mainstay, won a tournament in Mainland China a while back.

With almost unlimited powers, Graham Lim ran the BAP like his own parlor, dispatching players for overseas battles plucked from areas not known to breed basketball greats.

Mainly there was PCCr, known admittedly as producer of the finest policemen in the country but not basketball talents fit for the PBA, if not international play.

Nobody would have minded, except that such teams would finish last most of the time, or near the cellar.

The height of idiocy happened when a comedian-riddled squad from Parañaque defeated a Philippine team that was supposedly deep into training for a mission overseas. That drew flak from the crazed cage fans of this nation whose well-loved religion next to Catholicism was basketball. In shame, the team was disbanded. Before we knew it, its coach, Boyzie Zamar, had flown to Indonesia for a coaching job. Not long after, the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) general assembly expelled the BAP from the POC.

Even before all this had happened, Graham Lim was battling another war more pressing than turf rights: Seeking Filipino citizenship amid the diabolical scheme of two of his former BAP associates to have him deported for being an alien.

Recently, he was arrested and ordered deported—by whom, this country of endless imperfections wants to know. What, Raul Gonzalez did it?

But even before we could decipher who ordered his arrest, who ordered his deportation, the Court of Appeals came to Graham Lim's rescue by ordering his release from the custody of the Bureau of Immigration. His deportation to Taiwan had also been deferred.

For 19 days, Graham Lim suffered the ignominy of being detained and the telling pain of getting hospitalized due to hypertension brought on by tension and anxiety.

Staggering back to home sweet home, Graham Lim may have lost several associates but remains unbroken in spirit—unshaken, steadfast in his fight to earn Filipino citizenship.

Where will they deport the man who was born and raised in the Philippines, nobody knows.

China will not accept him because he is not a Chinese citizen.

Taiwan will not accept him either even if he allegedly travels using a Taiwan document.

When will they make him Filipino, nobody knows.

Why they continue to deny his application for Filipino citizenship on a mere technicality defies logic. If he were surnamed Toh instead of Lim, would it have mattered?

Twice, Malacañang has denied his appeal not to be deported. Yet, he remains undeported.

What mystery surrounds this man, what cloak protects him from banishment?

Definitely, Graham Lim is more than just a basketball man.

Who is this man, not even Go Teng Kok, Graham Lim's long-time benefactor, knows the answer any longer.

When will his saga end, I do not have the slightest hint.

* * *

FASTBREAK. It's all systems go for the 3rd Rey Berroya Cup, the nation's most prestigious invitational shooting event, on April 22-23 at the Quezon City Police firing range, Camp Karingal, Q.C. The PPSA-sanctioned Level 1 match features 5 action-packed pistol and 3 shotgun stages. Proceeds of the shoot will go to the burned and crippled children under the care of Maharlika Shrine Oasis and The Green Initiatives Inc.

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

Spring Oil rips Pearl Hotel-EAC for victory No. 4

DEFENDING CHAMPION SPRING Cooking Oil made it four in a row, blasting Pearl Hotel-Emilio Aguinaldo College, 76-60, Tuesday in the 2006 Picaa Open basketball tournament at the EAC gym in Manila.

The Cooking Oil Masters of national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla drew balanced scoring from Aldrin Morante, Danny Capobres, Mar Reyes and Rodel Manuel to frustrate the Hoteliers and move within a win of completing a first round sweep of the tourney sponsored by Chloe Lightings and Tomish Caffe.

Morante scattered 12 points and orchestrated the plays for Spring which led from start to finish.

Capobres and Reyes added 10 points apiece while Manuel contributed 9.

Nino Songco carried the fight for Pearl with 14 markers.

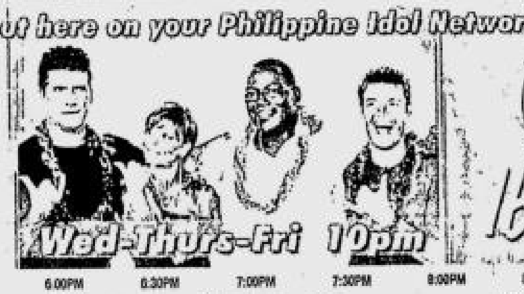
Overshadowed by Spring's triumph was Wang's 83-74 win over UP-Mighty Filter Kings in the other game.

The scores:

SPRING 76—Morante 12, Capobres 10, Reyes 10, Manuel 9, Olano 7, Tiongco 7, De Castro 6, Yambao 4, Soriano 3, Yee 2, Cuenca 2, Barnson 2, Neo 1.

PEARL-EAC 60—Songco 14, Ebuen 12, Manansala 9, Baybay 8, Buenafe 5, Hubalde 5, Samlous-Uy 4, Valderama 2, E. Castillo 1, Tejada 0, Anzures 0, J. Castillo 0, De Guzman 0, Musni 0.

Quarters: 15-13, 37-29, 51-43, 76-60.



Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
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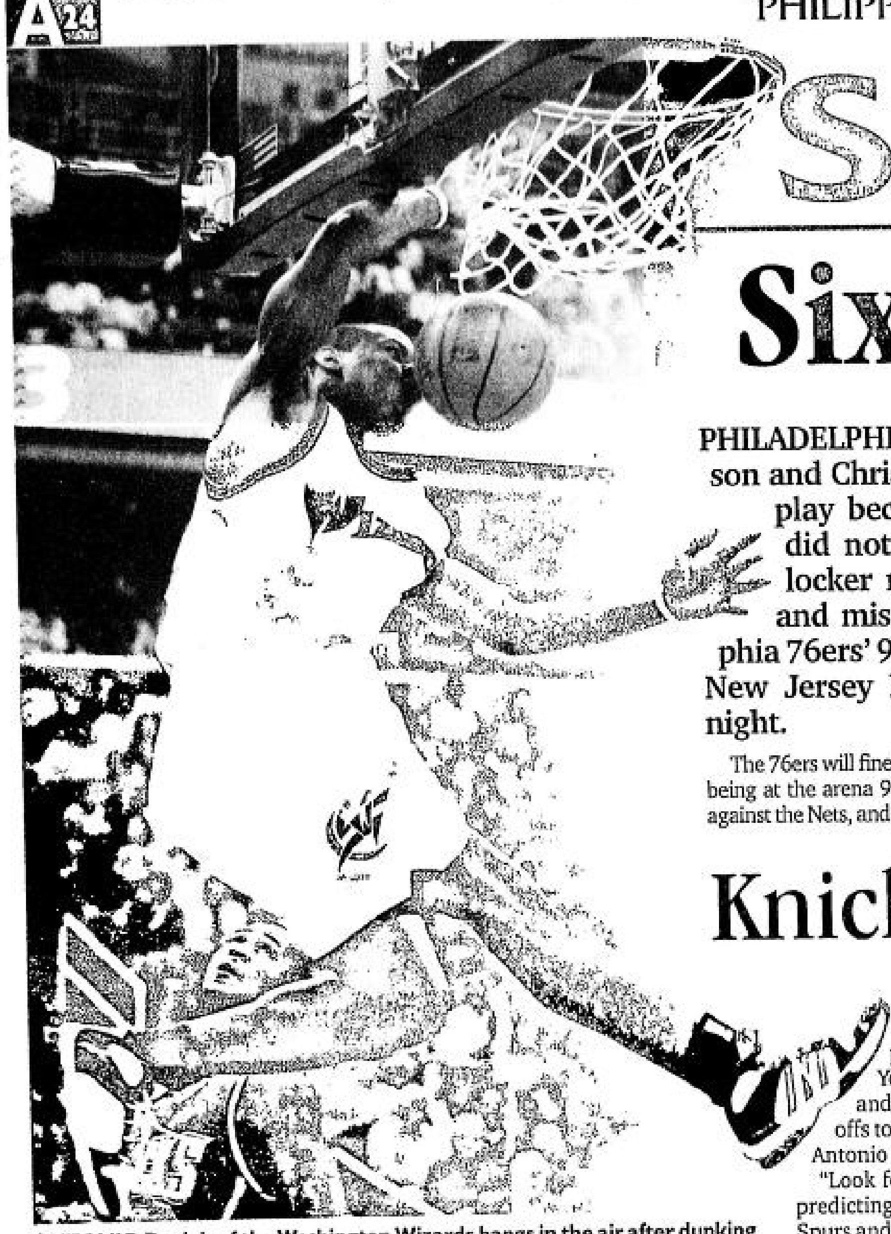
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Thursday, April 20, 2006

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)	National Geographic	Barclay's EPL		FA Cup		Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	S.O.S		Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko		Big News	All Results Show	Dokyu		Billboard On-Air
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Teens	TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Panday	Princess Lulu		Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider
AXN		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		CSI: Miami (Season II)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	Sakura Wars	Sakura Wars	PSI Factor (Season III)		Fear Factor (Season V)		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Sports Disaster VI		Chasing Death: Catastrophes Caught On Tape II	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		Powerpuff Girls		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Pulang Diablo				Magnifico				Ang Erpat Kong Astig				Babae Sa Bintana				Tag-Araw Sa Tag-Ulan	
Cinemax		Dark Skies: The Awakening			House Of Wax (4:45 PM)				King Ralph (6:20 PM)			The Kiss			Dead Words (9:15 PM)			Jawbreaker (11:05 PM)	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	CNN Business Traveller	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Crossing Jordan		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	North Mission Road	Law & Order		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		What Should You Do?		The Closer		Prison Break	
Discovery Channel		Stormproof: Saving Our Crumbling Coastlines		The Greatest Ever		Animal Face-Off		The Future Is Wild		Extreme Engineering		Mean Machine	Connect	Mythbusters		Mega Moves		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/ [illegible]	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven/ That's So Trendy [illegible]	Wonderful World Of Disney			Tutenstein	Lizzie McGuire	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '05 BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships Finals		Pool World Pool Masters 2001		Asian X Games '05 Presented by Kia	Asian X Games '05 Presented by Kia	In The Driver's Seat	Table Tennis '05 Killerspin	Pro Billiards '05 Men's World Summit of Pool		Pro Billiards '05 Women's Trick Shot Magic Billiards		Sportscenter Asia	2005 Kaohsiung World Pool C'ship				Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Veronica Mars 2		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Chaplet Of Divine Mercy	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Virtue Storybook	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	The Sacraments Through The Ages	EWTN Presents		EWTN Live, Rosary With Fr. Mitch Pacwa		Daily Mass Live		Angelus (9:15 PM)	The Seven Sacraments	Images of Mary	Behold the Man, Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royal Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Rosa de [illegible]	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Jewel In The Palace		Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV (3:15 PM)		Silent Night (4:05 PM)				Bewitched	The Nanny	Family Law III		Missing II		Spooks I		[illegible] Terror On The Mountain			Spooks I (11:45PM)
HBO	Iron Jawed Angels				Catch-22				Cellular			Rome Ep 07: Pharsalus		Rome Ep 08: Caesarion		Rome Ep 09: Utica (10:50 PM)	The Enemy Within		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Shadow Of The Elves	Mission Odyssey	Rune Soldier	BeyBlade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mama de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Mission Odyssey
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Smackdown				JLU	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV			Everybody Hates Chris	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck's	Sweet Dreams	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Tyler's Ultimate	Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		It's Good To Be	Martha		Your Private Island	Genuine Article	E! True Hollywood Story	
MTV Philippines					Pop Inc		2006 MAA Nominees Specials	MTV Hits		Get Spotted									
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Africa From The Ground Up	Megastructures		Storm Stories		Frontlines of Construction		Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Terrorism Week		Megastructures: [illegible]		Storm Stories: [illegible]	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Asia	[illegible]	Teledyaryo [illegible]		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Buddy OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon				My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly OddParents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly OddParents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			[illegible]				[illegible]				Tagos Ng Dugo				[illegible]				[illegible]
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zorro	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Live At Aegean	Icons	Now	Laugh To Laugh Ang Kulit	O, Mare Ko		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9							Arangkada Balita	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The 4400		Medium		Invasion		Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	[illegible]	Police Hour
SBN 21				Now Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports							NBA Game [illegible]					NBA Game [illegible]					Sportsdesk	Asian Badminton C'ships Finals	
Sports Plus	NBA Game [illegible]					World Poker Tour 2				Globo World Cup Preview 6	Slipstream	World's Greatest Auto Shows		World Game		[illegible] Celebrity Poker Challenge			
Star Movies				Out Of Reach			Desolation Sound			Mortal Thoughts (7:15 PM)				Out Of Time			[illegible]		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		American Idol	The Simple Life	The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	American Idol	The Simple Life	Scrubs	8 Simple Rules/ Arrested Development	The Drew Carey Show	Less Than Perfect	Seinfeld	American Idol
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Spirits	TBA	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Videos		Alias (8:20 PM)	Desperate Housewives		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

SPORTS



ANTONIO Daniels of the Washington Wizards hangs in the air after dunking the ball in front of Bobby Simmons of the Milwaukee Bucks. REUTERS

Sixers fine C-Webb, AI

PHILADELPHIA—ALLEN IVERSON and Chris Webber did not play because of injuries, did not show up in the locker room until tipoff and missed the Philadelphia 76ers' 91-88 win over the New Jersey Nets on Tuesday night.

The 76ers will fine Iverson and Webber for not being at the arena 90 minutes before the game against the Nets, and the duo might not make the trip to close out the season in Charlotte on Wednesday.

King said he knew at Tuesday morning's shootaround that Iverson and Webber would be given the home regular-season finale off because of injuries. But King did expect the Sixers' leading scorers to be at the game.

Andre Iguodala had 27 points for the Sixers, Willie Green had 14 and Steven Hunter 10.

Lamond Murray scored 19 points for New Jersey, Vince Carter had 16 and Jacque Vaughn added 13 assists.

In other games, it was: Atlanta 103, Miami 100; Washington 116, Milwaukee 103; Memphis 101, LA Clippers 95; Sacramento 111, Seattle 105

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas scored 31 of his 43 points in the second half, and Washington overcame a career-high 43 points from Michael Redd.

Redd and Arenas combined for 62 points in the second half as the two catalysts dueled with playoff intensity for the chance to avoid Detroit, Miami or New Jersey in the first round. Rarely has such a fuss been made over fifth place, but no one wants to face one of the top three seeds when Cleveland, returning to the playoffs after a long absence, is an available opponent at No. 4.

The victory gave the Wizards a one-game lead over Chicago and Indiana and a 1½-game lead over Milwaukee. *AP*

● NBA on SOLAR SPORTS—Memphis vs Minnesota (8 a.m.)

Knicks legend picks Spurs, Pistons

NEW YORK—WALT "CLYDE" FRAZIER, the Hall of Fame point guard who led the New York Knicks to NBA titles in 1970 and 1973, expects this year's playoffs to produce a rematch between San Antonio and Detroit in the Finals.

"Look for a little deja vu," Frazier said, predicting another showdown between the Spurs and Pistons.

"But look for a little twist this year because the Pistons have home court advantage and that might be enough to catapult them to the championship."

The Pistons, champions in 2004, lost in seven games to the Spurs in the 2005 Finals, dropping the finale in San Antonio.

Frazier, a TV commentator on Knicks broadcasts, eyed some potential surprises.

"In the Eastern Conference, the Nets could be a surprise team or the Cavaliers. Otherwise the Pistons are a clear-cut favorite," added Frazier, who said Miami was little more than a two-man team featuring Dwyane Wade and Shaquille O'Neal.

"Out West, I think Denver could be a darkhorse, the Suns, the Spurs, Dallas—it's going to be very difficult. I'm going with the Spurs as the best all-around team with the best all-around player in Tim Duncan."

Frazier announced a tour of former NBA stars bringing the league's championship trophy to US military bases. *Reuters*

UST cager dies trying to save two children

By Jasmine W. Payo

A YOUNG CAGER FROM THE UNIversity of Sto. Tomas died of electrocution after saving two children in a swimming pool accident in Tuguegarao last Saturday night.

John Lee Apil, a nephew of Barangay Ginebra star Romel Adducul, will be laid to rest on April 25 in his hometown in Solana, Tuguegarao. He was the only child of Charles Apil and Ines Abig.

The 21-year-old Apil, a first year commerce student in the physical education and athletic department, debuted with the Tigers in the last UAAP season.

Details of the accident were sketchy.

"He was a promising player," said former UST coach Nel Parado, who recruited Apil from St. Paul University in Tuguegarao. "When he played, he reminded us of (former UST star) Dale Singson."

Apil, a 6-foot guard, suited up for six games last season. Although he played only limited minutes on his first year, Parado credited Apil for his hard work.

"It was his birthday (Sept. 3) when he played his best game for UST," recalled Parado. "He didn't score much but he contributed in assists and we defeated Ateneo in the second round."

The UST community has been offering masses and tributes for Apil.

NBA great returns with optimism

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION LEGEND Calvin Murphy believes he will like what he sees—and people will still like what he can show—when he plays anew in the Philippines together with other former NBA greats in The Bad Boy Tour.

"I expect to see a higher quality of play, though I was quite pleased with the talent I saw in the 1970s," Murphy said, just a few days before arriving to play alongside fellow Hall-of-Famer Alex English and Dennis Rodman against two Philippine teams.

"They will see the same skills (from me) and a great entertainer," Murphy added.

Two games are set, the first at the Mandaue City in Cebu against the San Miguel All-Stars on April 27 and the second at the Araneta Coliseum on May 1 against Pilipinas Basketball made up of the finest standouts in the Philippine Basketball Association to be coached by Chot Reyes.

Murphy's team will not be short-handed, with Sidney Moncrief, Daryll Dawkins, Otis Birdsong English and Rodman also playing. The Americans will be backstopped by high-flying standouts from the NBA's Developmental League.

"Fans will see American basketball played to its finest, in above-the-rim levels," said Mario Whitmire, president of West End Sports which is bringing the team of former NBA All Stars over.

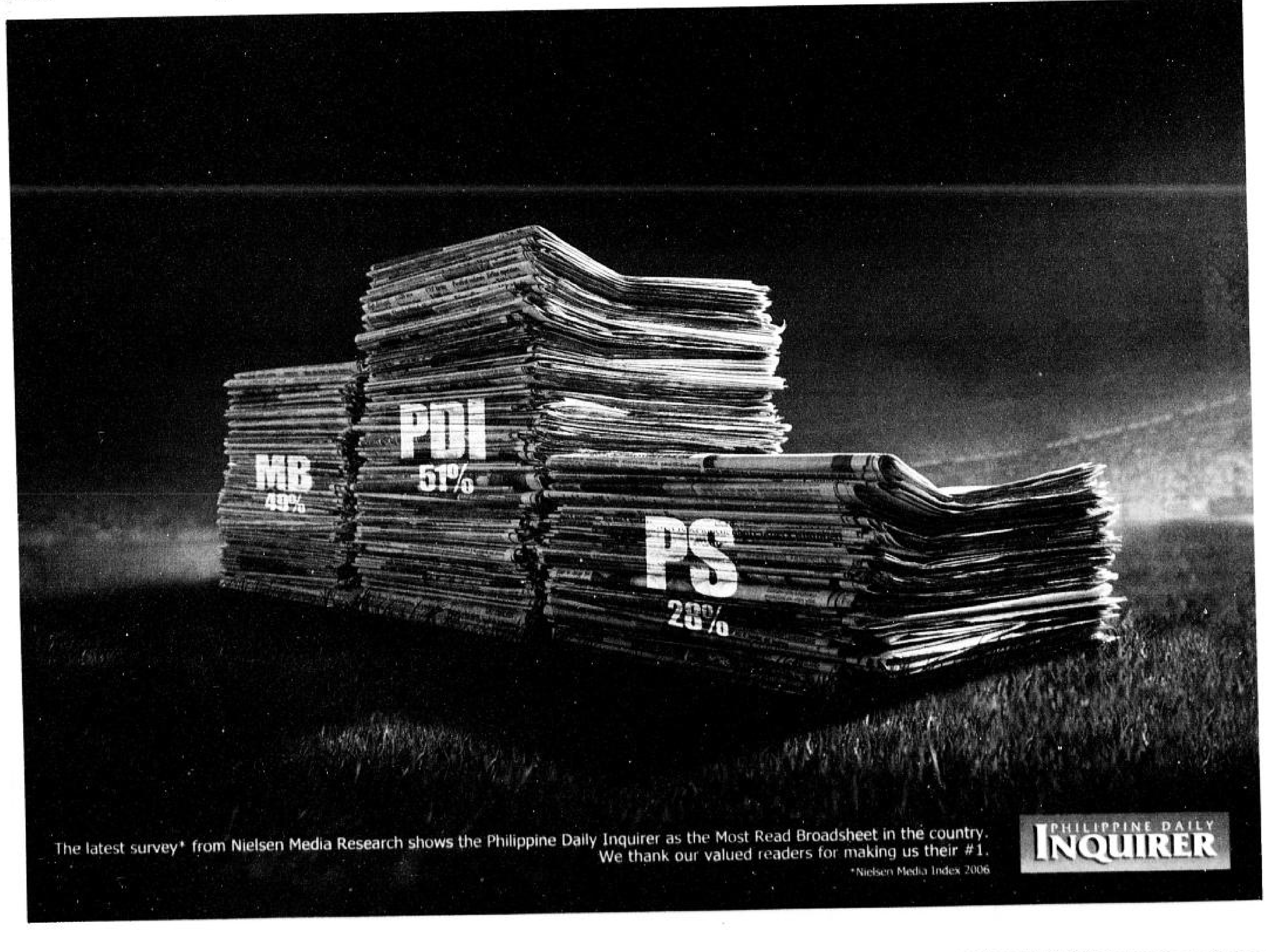
Whitmire got excited after getting the confirmation on the participation of Murphy, one of the shortest men to ever play in the NBA but whose storied career gave him a Hall-of-Fame ticket.

Just 5-foot-9, Murphy, who was drafted in the second round by the San Diego Rockets in 1970, finished with career numbers of 17.9 points, 1,165 steals and 4,402 assists in 1,022 games.

Murphy also said that the Philippines could soon be represented in the NBA.

"Coaches in the NBA today don't look at size," said Murphy, who owns the NBA record for consecutive free throws made at 78, which he set in the 1980-81 season. "They look at talent."

MURPHY: Great entertainer.



The latest survey* from Nielsen Media Research shows the Philippine Daily Inquirer as the Most Read Broadsheet in the country.
We thank our valued readers for making us their #1.
*Nielsen Media Index 2006
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Klownz 'fired' Sexbomb

Girls' manager says they didn't walk out on show

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE SEXBOMB GIRLS WERE kicked out of Klownz.

"As the group's manager, I had to find work for my artists," Joy Cancio told INQUIRER Entertainment on Monday.

Cancio was reacting to widespread talk that the Sexbomb Girls packed up and brought their act to rival comedy bars in protest of their sudden dismissal as regular performers on the noontime television show "Eat... Bulaga!"

Klownz, located on Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, is partly owned by "Eat... Bulaga!" host Allan K. The Sexbomb girls used to perform there Thursday nights.

"It was on a Thursday morning that I received a call from Lito [Alejandria], saying the girls would not be performing at Klownz that night. Lito told me it was his decision," Cancio said.

Alejandria is Allan K's business partner and manager of Klownz and Zirkoh bars.

Calm acceptance

"I accepted the news calmly," Cancio continued. The next day, when a TV crew interviewed Allan K, he said we didn't show up. So I called up Lito and told him that I would then have to find work for the girls."

In an earlier interview on the news program "24 Oras," Allan K said he was saddened not only by the fact that the girls had stood them up but also by the news that they performed at the rival comedy club Punchline.

The Sexbomb Girls are now regulars at Punchline and Laffline, also in Quezon City.

"Why would we turn down an opportunity? When we were taken out of 'Bulaga,' the gig in Klownz was the only thing we had," said Sexbomb Mia Pangyarihan. "When we first found out we were jobless, everyone got tensed—some even cried. That same night *Ate* Joy said, 'Don't worry, we'll find something.' That's how we got to perform at Punchline. What does Klownz have to do with 'Bulaga'?"

Cancio said she would rather not discuss her rift with Malou Choa-Fagar and Tony Tuviera, executives of Television and Production Exponents Inc. (TAPE) and producers of the show on GMA 7.

Family feud

"I consider this a quarrel among family members," she said. "I've apologized to them via a text message to Malou. Let's leave all this behind."

"We have no quarrel with the other hosts," added Rochelle Pangilinan, leader of the all-female group. "I talk with some of them regu-

KLOWNZ/ A2-2

SEXBOMB Dancers: These boots are made for ... doing what to Allan K?

POKWANG and Eugene Domingo: The movie belongs to them.

Happiest movie of the summer

By Paul Daza
Contributor

'D' Lucky Ones' dispenses jokes quickly and abundantly, making it easy for viewers to gloss over rough spots

REVIEW

AFTER A STRING OF repetitive, formulaic "kilig" movies, how wonderful and refreshing it is to see the inventive new Star Cinema comedy, "D' Lucky Ones." A wacky story about two Vilmanians—Lea (Pokwang) and Tina (Eugene Domingo)—who use their obsession with the Star for All Seasons to cope with personal problems, "D' Lucky Ones" is one rare Tagalog movie that delivers exactly what it promises, and more. It's not merely the happiest movie of the summer, it's the happiest movie of many seasons.

Much of the movie's publicity is centered on real-life lovers Sandara Park and Joseph Bitangcol. Based on audience reaction, however, the movie belongs to the two comedians playing their drama queen mothers. Watching Pokwang and Eugene have a grand gay time with their hilarious but straight-faced interpretations of drama icon Vilma Santos is truly one of the year's most unexpected pleasures.

In the wake of the scene-stealing antics of Eugene Domingo and Pokwang, the supporting cast barely has an opportunity to make an impression. Candy Pangilinan's best line, in which she says that impersonator Jon Santos looks like Vilma but sounds like Ralph Recto, gets only a polite laugh in the theater because it's been played to death in the TV trailers. As a hunk named "Ralph" whom Lea and Tina are lusting after, JR Valentin doesn't rise above the story's limited demands on his character. He was far more effective as the crush of Maximo in "Ang Pagdadalaga Ni Maximo Oliveros."

Press releases aside, Sandara Park and Joseph Bitangcol have a

HAPPIEST/ A2-3

Beneficiaries seek status quo on MMFF pie

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

STATUS QUO:

This is the stand of the heads of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the Motion Picture Anti-Film Piracy Council Inc. regarding the reallocation of the Metro Manila Film Festival earnings.

"MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando told me that, since the new allocation had been drafted without his consent or knowledge, he could appeal to Malacañang for a reconsideration on our behalf," Ric Camaligan, president of the council, told INQUIRER Entertainment in an exclusive interview. "The MMDA chair is overall head of the MMFF."

This was confirmed in an overseas phone interview with Fernando, who is currently vacationing in Egypt.

"I will bring the council's appeal to the attention of Malacañang," Fernando confirmed.

Camaligan clarified his organization's stand: "We seek the maintenance of the original allocation."

In the new allocation, the council's share was slashed from the original 30 to 5 percent. The share of the Film Academy of the Philippines was cut from 30 to 10 percent.

Clarification

The share of the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation Inc. (Mowelfund) was increased from 30 to 35 percent. Two new beneficiaries were added—the Optical Media Board (OMB) and the Film Development Council of the Philippines, with 10 percent each.

The President's Social Fund was also upped from 10 to 35 percent, with the provision that such "amount shall be used for film welfare."

"Chair Fernando can ask clarification from Malacañang as to the definition of 'film welfare' and as to who can tap this special fund," Camaligan said.

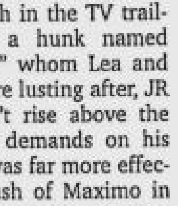
In an emergency meeting held on March 29, Camaligan said the council officers, composed of producers and theater owners, reiterated their solidarity.

He said he couldn't understand why the OMB had sought a share in the MMFF pie when the council had been providing it with a monthly stipend of P200,000 or P2.4 million a year—a substantial part of the council's usual share of P8 to 9 million.

"The council provided OMB with an additional P480,000 last year," Camaligan noted. "We've cooperated with them. I don't see why we can't stick to the original arrangement."

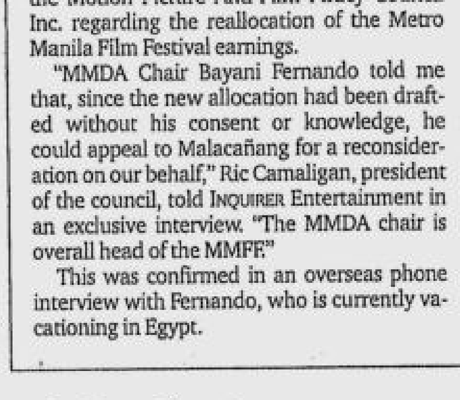
Interest in 'Da Vinci Code,' the movie, starts to peak

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

Will we get to see it ?



FOR MONTHS NOW, FILM AND RELIGIOUS circles have been buzzing with speculations about the contents and prospects of the movie version of Dan Brown's controversial novel, "The Da Vinci Code."

Since it's set to open next month, interest in and even agitation over its screening has started to peak.

It has also been fueled by the recent Holy Week observance, which recalled the Passion of Jesus Christ, and the cleverly timed release last week of "The Gospel of Judas."

Since "Da Vinci" revealed the existence of the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, who in Brown's novel is placed in a romantic relationship with Jesus, the new revelation of Judas' own "gospel" adds further unction to the "things are not as they seem" tenor, biblically speaking, of the original controversy.

This has made the movie potentially even more controversial than the book—so that some theater owners are reportedly hesitant to show it here.

Another report has it that some groups may boycott the movie.

'Super-controversy'

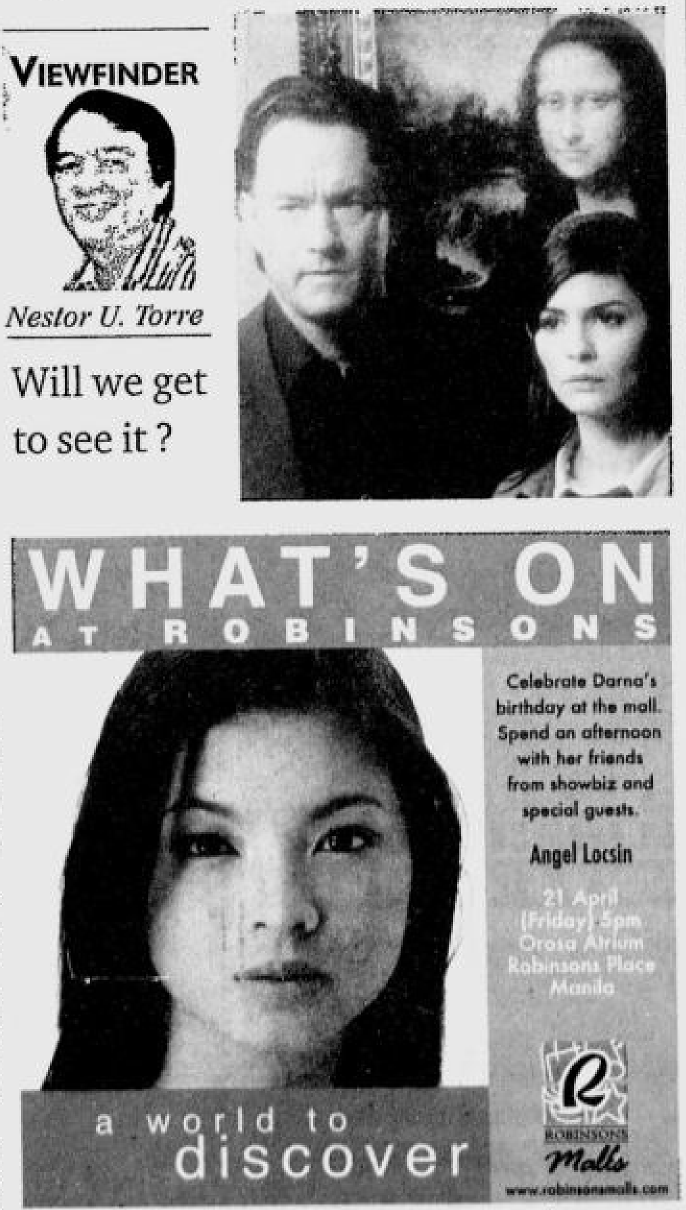
Other Catholics caution against such preemptory moves, because they could achieve the opposite effect: Instead of diminishing the movie's impact, it could increase that, because the attendant "super-controversy" could make it even more of a "must-see" film in many people's estimation.

Rather, some enlightened Catholics say, the film should be shown like any other production, and viewers should be free to react to it as they choose.

The Catholic reaction to the movie should be limited to evaluating it on point of facts and motive, so that the viewing public would be able to see the movie within the right context, and thus arrive at a more informed conclusion about its key thematic points.

Of late, the issue of the film's motive to hidden agenda has come to the fore in public dis-

INTEREST/ A2-2



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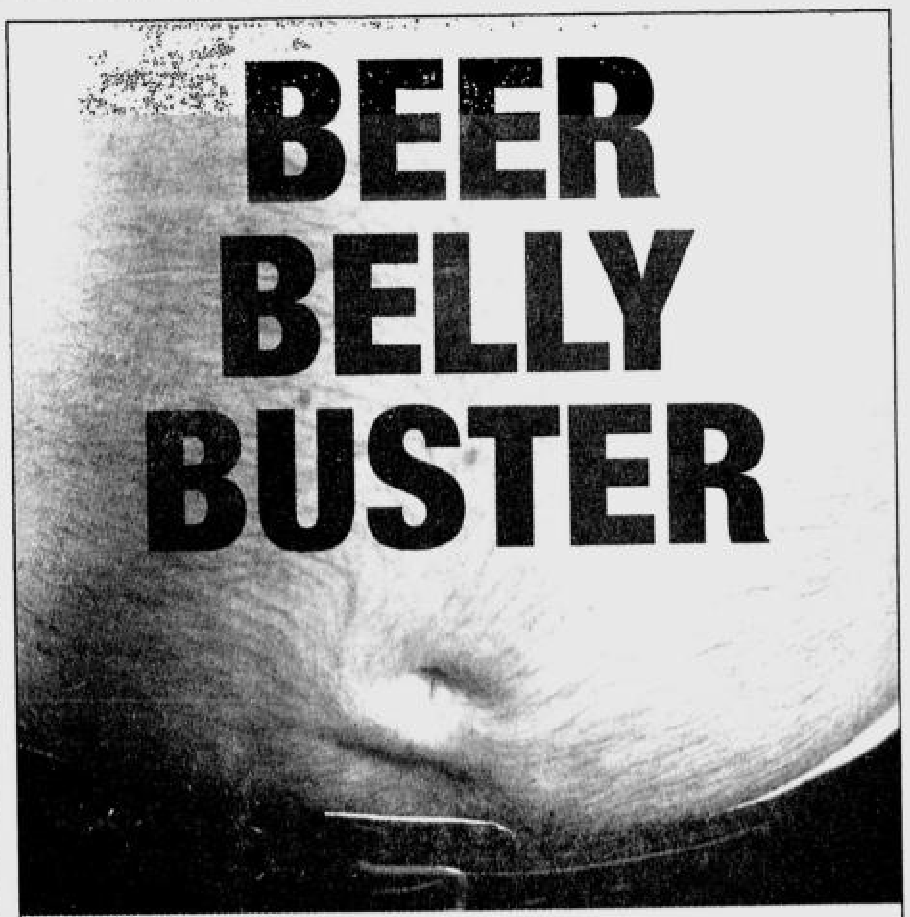

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Dennis Trillo and Iya Villania
Marian Rivera
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"The effects are outstanding. Very effective!" - Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera, National Artist for Literature

"This signifies the birth of a new horror director here in the Philippines."
-Philip Cu-Unjieng, Philippine Star columnist & Marketing Director of ABS-CBN Publishing

"Dennis Trillo gives a stellar performance and Jaclyn Jose arrives later in the film to give her most subtly creepy performance yet." - Quark Henares, award-winning director

"It's a quality film from Regal Entertainment and Rahyan Carlos. Congratulations!"
-Wilma Galvante, Senior Vice President of Entertainment TV Group GMA Network, Inc.

Klownz 'fired' Sexbomb

From page A2-1

larly until now."

Cancio also denied that the group has received offers from ABS-CBN. In fact, the 11th season ("Nasaan Ka?") of their afternoon soap opera on GMA 7, "Daisy Siete," will premiere on April 24.

Meeting with Charo?

"It's not true, either, that I had a meeting with Charo Santos-Concio. I'd have bragged about that; it's the kind of person that I am," Cancio said. "Mother Lily (Monteverde) gifted me with a box of *tikoy* once. I was so flattered, I had the box framed."

Santos-Concio is ABS-CBN's executive vice president and manager.

Cancio refused to discuss her falling out with former Sexbomb Sugar Mercado. A source close to both parties said the rift was due to Sugar's decision to sign a talent agreement with TAPE Inc. instead of renewing her contract with Cancio's Focus Entertainment Inc.

But Mia, the most outspoken member of the group, said her quarrel with Sugar began when the latter and her (Sugar) mother started saying "mean things" about her. "They said I wasn't fit to be a dancer, that I should be working as a prostitute. I don't know why Sugar's mom is such a bitter woman. Maybe because I replaced Aira (Bermudez) as the

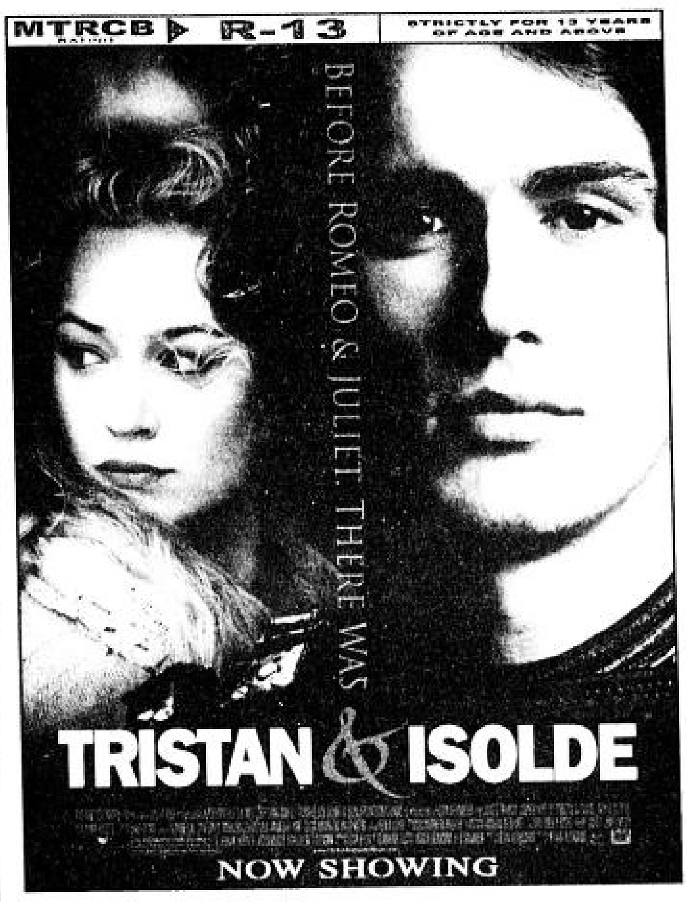
KLOWNZ/ A2-3

Interest in 'Da Vinci ...

From page A2-1

cussions about the production. Brown and film director Ron Howard maintain that they are simply encouraging a review of early church history and the roots of the Christian faith. Thus, "Da Vinci" could even end up strengthening people's beliefs, should they survive the "reinvestigation."

On the *other* hand, some biblical experts see in "Da Vinci" and "Judas" a concerted attack on Christian tenets, so viewers are urged to distinguish fact from clever conjecture, or subliminal persuasion.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NOW SHOWING

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① ICE AGE 2
MTRCB GP
1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00 LMF

② EIGHT BELOW
MTRCB GP
2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 LMF

③ SUBMERGE
MTRCB R-13
12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

④ TRISTAN & ISOLDE
MTRCB R-13
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE KIDDIE FILM FEST
MTRCB GP 11:40, 1:45, 3:50, 5:55, 8:00 LMF
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

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SUBMERGED R13 1:35,3:45,5:55,8:05,10:15	TRISTAN AND ISOLDE R13 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15	EIGHT BELOW GP 12:00,2:30,5:00, 7:30,10:00
D' LUCKY ONES GP 1:10,3:20,5:30, 7:40,9:50	AMERICAN SOLDIERS R13 12:45,2:55,5:05, 7:15,9:25	ICE AGE 2 G 11:30,1:30,3:30, 5:30,7:30,9:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440-41
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Terror has been launched undersea.
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SUBMERGED
EUROIMAGE
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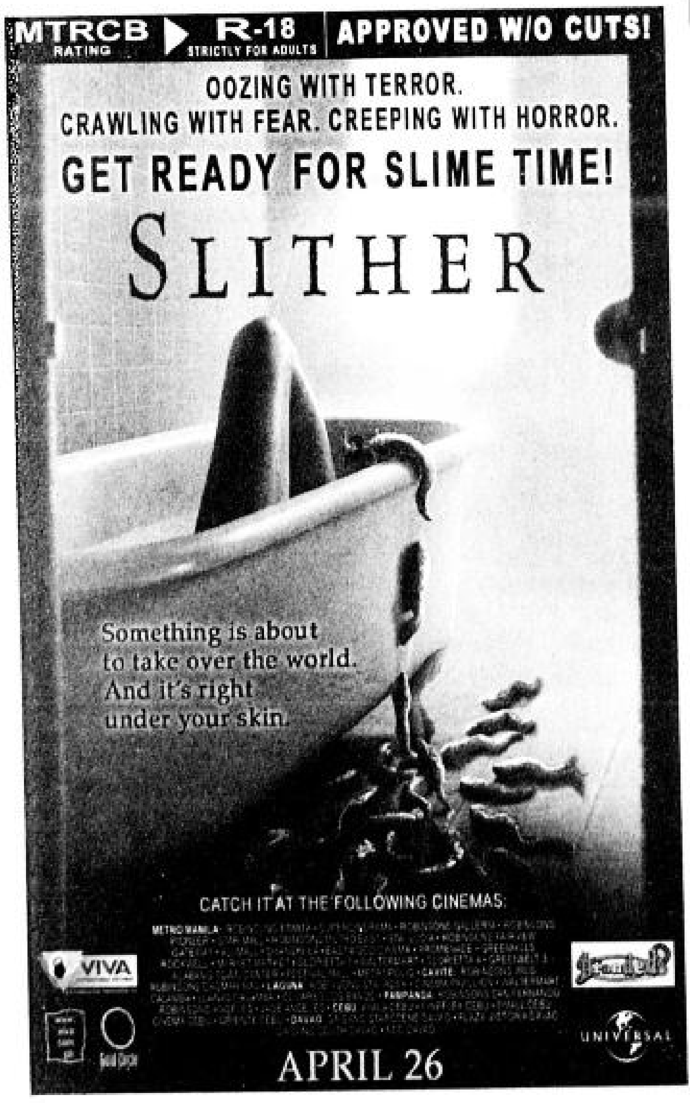
MTRCB RATING R-18 STRICTLY FOR ADULTS
APPROVED W/O CUTS!
OOZING WITH TERROR.
CRAWLING WITH FEAR. CREEPING WITH HORROR.
GET READY FOR SLIME TIME!
SLITHER
Something is about to take over the world. And it's right under your skin.
CATCH IT AT THE FOLLOWING CINEMAS:
VIVA
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NOW SHOWING
MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP.
YOU'VE READ ABOUT IT. YOU'VE TALKED ABOUT IT. NOW, WITNESS THE DEVASTATING IRAQ WAR AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
TRAPPED BEHIND ENEMY LINES.
A WAR FOUGHT WITHOUT RULES.
CURTIS MORGAN
ZEN CALABRETTA
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AMERICAN SOLDIERS
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11:40, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:25, 10:30
R13

CINEMA 2 SUBMERGED
10:30, 12:50, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30
PG13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 ICE AGE 2
11:00, 1:15, 3:30, 5:45, 8:00, 10:20
GP

CINEMA 4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
GP

CINEMA 5 EIGHT BELOW
11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
R13

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MUSIC MUSEUM

APRIL 26, 2006	FREESTYLE & POPS FERNANDEZ	8:00PM
APRIL 27 & 28, 2006	WILLIE NEPOMUCENO	8:00PM

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PROMENADE GREENHILLS

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EVA LONGORIA KIM BASINGER
The SENTINEL
IN 141 YEARS, THERE'S NEVER BEEN A TRAITOR IN THE SECRET SERVICE ... UNTIL NOW
OPENS APRIL 26

Happiest movie of the summer

From page A2-1

long way to go before they can become the next Maricel Soriano-William Martinez tandem. Though Sandara Park appears more comfortable and relaxed here, compared to prior screen outings, her partner Joseph Bitangcol looks like he's constantly *acting*, always aware of a camera recording his performance, killing any opportunities for spontaneity.

Good thing, though, that the jokes come quickly and abundantly, making it easy to gloss over other rough spots. More often than not, the manic, breathless pacing doesn't even give viewers enough time to giggle before the next joke is already being set up. If few get the allusions to "Pahiram Ng Isang Umaga" or "Sister Stella L," there are spoofs of more recent Ate Vi blockbusters like "Anak" and "Bata Bata Paano Ka Ginawa?" for younger viewers.

Under the assured direction of Wenn Deramas, who spoofed Star Cinema's blockbusters in "Ang Tanging Ina" and who now mines Vilma Santos' classic flicks for more comedy gold, the gags in "D' Lucky Ones" are more visual than verbal, relying more on performance than on scripted dialogue. Just seeing Domingo and Pokwang try to dress and look like their idol is enough to plant a smile on your face for minutes at a time. Still, there are some witty verbal gems, like Domingo's admission to Pokwang that it's not true she kept a slumbook while in high school … because she never went to high school!

Praise is also in order for the sunny cinematography of Sherman So and Nancy Arcega's rainbow-colored production design for actualizing the movie's upbeat tone . Their work makes the world of "D Lucky Ones" look like it was shot from the point of view of a cheerful, optimistic child.

Credit should be given to writers Rose Colindres and Ted Boborol, who had the smarts to use the main characters' love for Vilma Santos' movies not just as a gimmick, but as an integral part of the story. Pokwang's revelation to Sandara about how Vilma's movies helped her survive a terrible life in Korea was an unexpectedly moving insight on entertainment's remarkable power to bring joy to the joyless. Now isn't that exactly what we need?

Klownz 'fired' Sexbomb

From page A2-2

dancer on the program's 'TKO' segment. But that was a management decision, not because I'm anyone's favorite. I haven't met with Sugar since. Do I want to see her? If we bumped into each other at this time, I don't think I'd even talk with her. *Dedma lang.*"

Rochelle said she recently received a text message from Sugar. The message read: "Gud am. Ate *mahal ko po kayo. Alam ko po may tampo kayo sa akin. Ingat po lagi. Sori po sa abala.* God bless. (I love all of you. I know you don't feel so good about me right now. Take care. Sorry for the bother)."

"I have only one thing to ask her," said Rochelle. "Why? I'm not angry, just disappointed. It's tough on Mia. Sugar singled her out and we don't know why. Maybe because Mia is one of the group's leaders. She's strict. She might have offended Sugar, who's really, really sensitive."

Gina Marissa Tagasa is head writer of "Nasaan Ka?" Pat Perez directs. The series also features Jan Rodrigo, Dexter Doria, Irma Adlawan and Biboy Ramirez.

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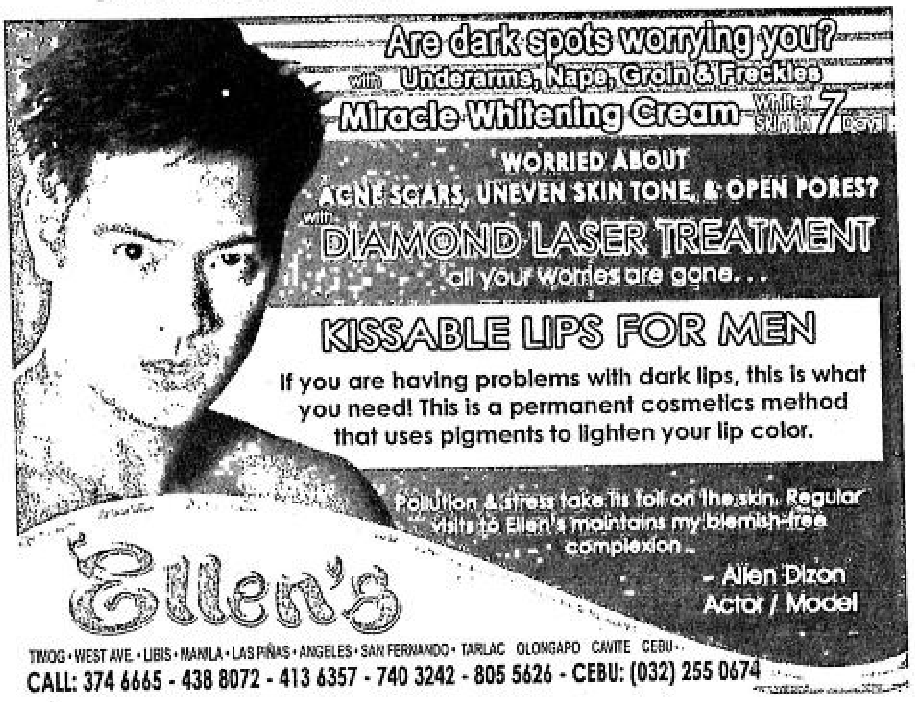
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
11:55, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:00
R-13

2 ICE AGE 2
12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:30
G

3 EIGHT BELOW
12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00
GP

4 SUBMERGED
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
R-13



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G1 GLORIETTA 1
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 PAMAHIIN
4 SUBMERGED

G4 GLORIETTA 4
1 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 THX TRISTAN & ISOLDE 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
4 SUBMERGED
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 EIGHT BELOW
7 PAMAHIIN

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN

GB3 GREENBELT 3
1 THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
2 THX EIGHT BELOW 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS
3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
4 RENT 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS
5 TRISTAN & ISOLDE 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 THX EIGHT BELOW
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN
4 PAMAHIIN
5 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 D' LUCKY ONES

M2 MARKET! MARKET!
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 SUBMERGED
3 PAMAHIIN
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN

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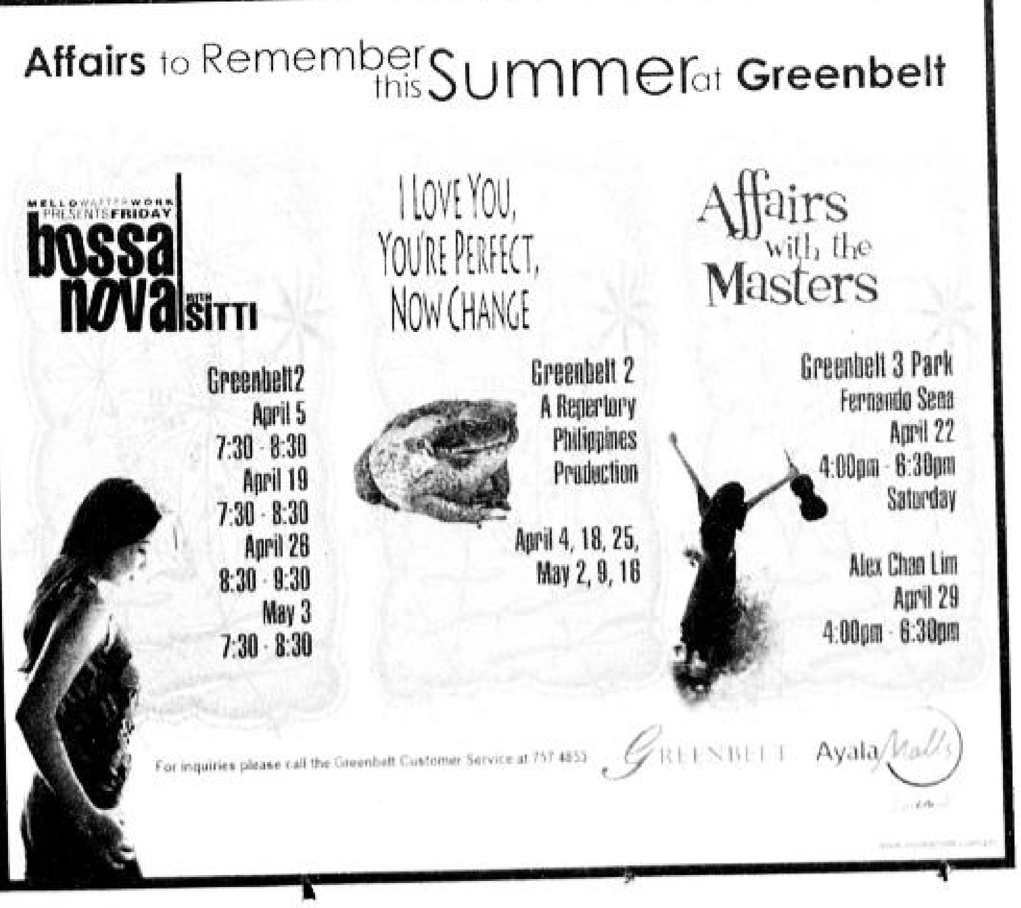

Affairs to Remember this Summer at Greenbelt

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Greenbelt2
April 5
7:30 - 8:30
April 19
7:30 - 8:30
April 26
8:30 - 9:30
May 3
7:30 - 8:30

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE
Greenbelt 2
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April 4, 18, 25,
May 2, 9, 16

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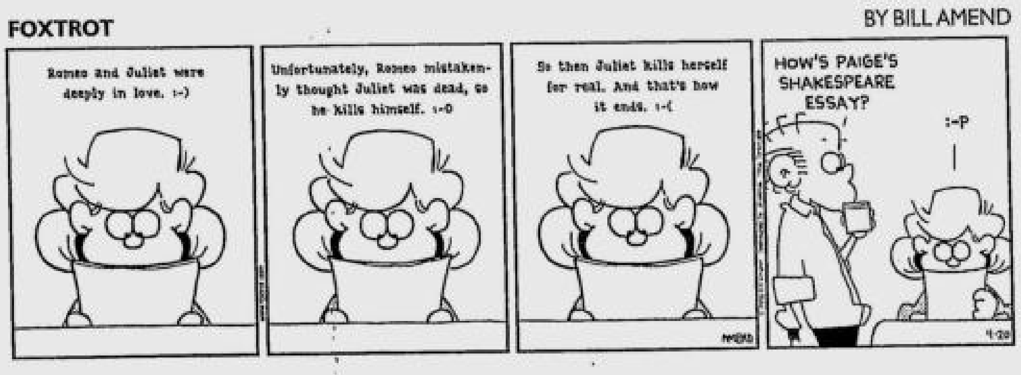
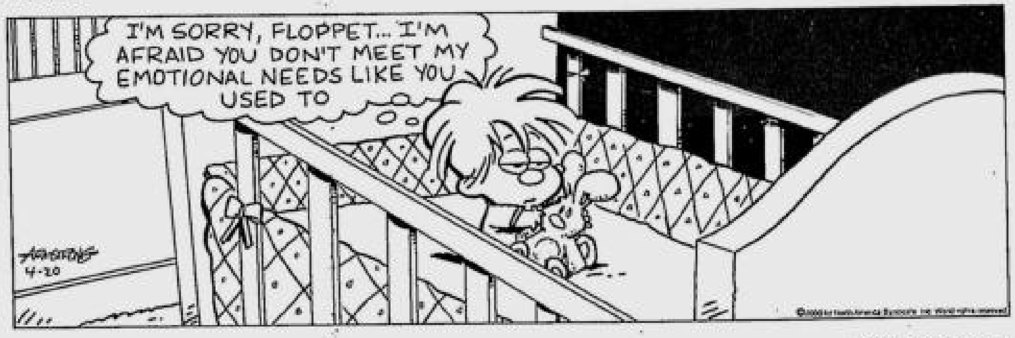
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


Romeo and Juliet were deeply in love. :-)
Unfortunately, Romeo mistakenly thought Juliet was dead, so he kills himself. :-O
So then Juliet kills herself for real. And that's how it ends. :-(
HOW'S PAIGE'S SHAKESPEARE ESSAY?
:-P

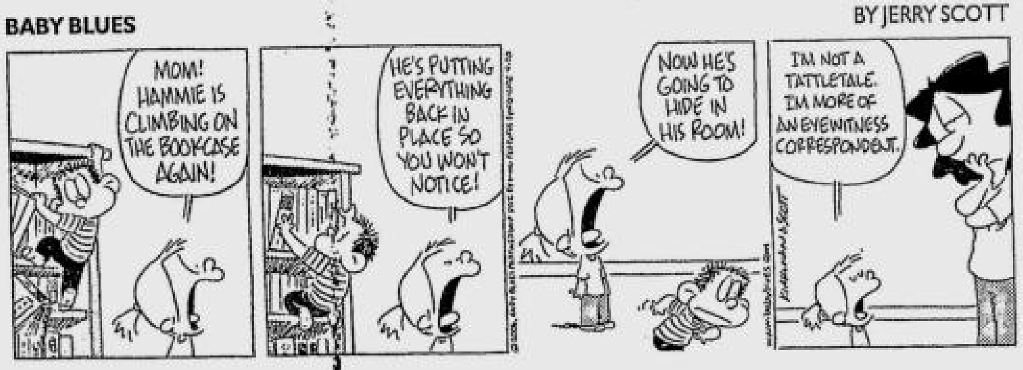
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'M SORRY, FLOPPET... I'M AFRAID YOU DON'T MEET MY EMOTIONAL NEEDS LIKE YOU USED TO
4-20

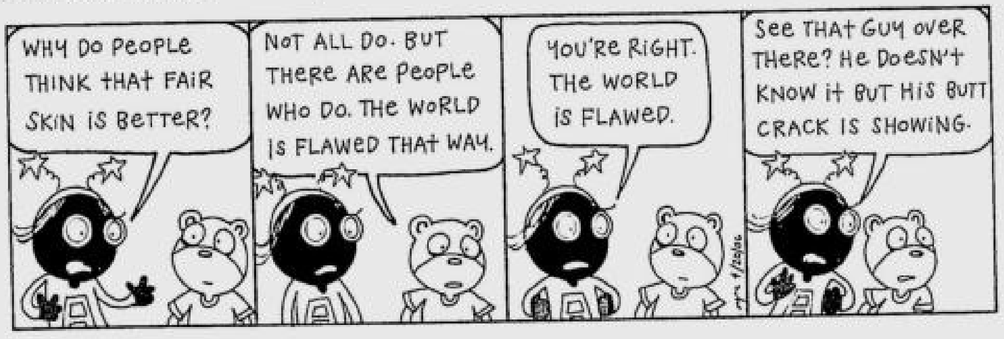
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOM! HAMMIE IS CLIMBING ON THE BOOKCASE AGAIN!
HE'S PUTTING EVERYTHING BACK IN PLACE SO YOU WON'T NOTICE!
NOW HE'S GOING TO HIDE IN HIS ROOM!
I'M NOT A TATTLETALE. I'M MORE OF AN EYEWITNESS CORRESPONDENT.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHY DO PEOPLE THINK THAT FAIR SKIN IS BETTER?
NOT ALL DO. BUT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO DO. THE WORLD IS FLAWED THAT WAY.
YOU'RE RIGHT. THE WORLD IS FLAWED.
SEE THAT GUY OVER THERE? HE DOESN'T KNOW IT BUT HIS BUTT CRACK IS SHOWING.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Your enthusiastic, courageous, spontaneous style attracts people to you. You have a steady and reliable nature combined with a flippant, quick-witted response to life. Ultimately, you're a down-to-earth straight-shooter who is quick to spot an opportunity. This year will hold major changes for you (possibly as significant as those in 1997).

Birthdate of: Luther Vandross, singer; Carmen Electra, celebrity beauty; Don Mattingly, baseballer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel very content and happy with yourself today. This wonderful feeling extends outward and makes you also feel generous to others. You want everyone to be happy!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Dealings with friends and groups are joyful and rewarding today. People are happy and friendly. You feel particularly well-liked and popular. Life is good!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today favors all kinds of business and commerce. Your dealings with bosses, VIPs and authority figures will be successful and smooth. This is a good day to make money.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Travel for pleasure definitely attracts you now! In fact, anything that expands your mind and offers adventure is hugely appealing to you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Inheritances, gifts and goodies definitely come your way now. It's your turn to collect! Some of you also feel romantically passionate. In many ways, the stars are blessing you today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You don't feel like working; instead, you want to enjoy the company of others. Therefore, get out and schmooze with people. Enjoy contact with the general public and spend time with friends.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a pleasant day at work. Co-workers are supportive and friendly. Everything goes along very smoothly. It seems like you can make a profit or create money with very little effort.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a wonderful day for love and romance! It's also a great day to enjoy playful activities with children. Anything that is fun or challenges your creative talents will delight you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Entertain at home. Invite people over. Shop for your home or for family members. Whatever you do will enhance your home and family life in a pleasant way. (Good day for real estate deals!)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a fabulous day for chatting with others (especially siblings), wheeling and dealing, buying and selling, signing contracts and negotiating deals. People are friendly and receptive.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): If you have any great moneymaking ideas, today is the day to run them up the flagpole! This is a good time for business and commerce. You'll also enjoy shopping. Cash is flowing!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today is full of grace, ease and pleasure. You find all social occasions amusing and entertaining. (Just sit around and relax.)

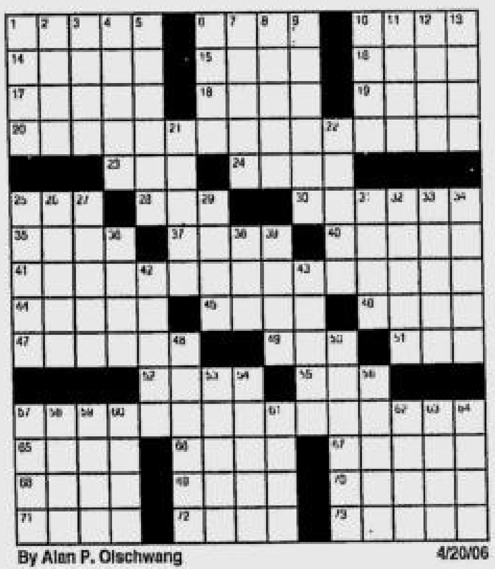
DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Strong will?
6 Water track
10 Chinese idol
14 Eyelashes
15 "The Virginian" writer Wister
16 NYC theatrical award
17 Go-between
18 Stable staple
19 "__ we forget..."
20 Start of Evan Esar quote
23 Spanish year
24 Address for a Friend
25 Bottle topper
28 Assn.
30 Hang loosely
35 1998 Sarah McLachlan hit
37 Jason's ship
40 Broadcasted again
41 Part 2 of quote
44 Concerning
45 Sound of contentment
46 Tailor's connection
47 Soup legume
49 Dawn goddess
51 Young fish
52 Hacks
55 Actress Long
57 End of quote
65 Back of the neck
66 Bread spread
67 React to a bad pun
68 Colonel Mustard's game
69 __ Bator, Mongolia
70 Jargon
71 Cologne mister
72 Small boy
73 Artist's tripod

DOWN

1 Ella's forte
2 "__ Noon"
3 On the quiet side
4 Ms. Ronstadt
5 Hispanic
6 Pound sound
7 Stand by for
8 Two-masted vessel
9 Followed
10 Sudden shock
11 Wedding-vow directive
12 Yes indeed, Maria
13 Tennis units
21 Raid
22 Master
25 Manmade waterway
26 Sun-dried brick
27 Climbing device
29 Handhold
31 Fish catchers
32 Sorrow
33 Harry Truman's birthplace
34 Opponent
36 Share a border
38 Wildebeest
39 Fairy-tale beast
42 New York city
43 Maine college town
48 Schematic arrangement
50 Unattached
53 Word with club or goal
54 Move furtively
56 Open courtyards
57 Length unit
58 Story
59 Cowboy's prod
60 Look intently
61 Departed
62 Charged particles
63 Wizard
64 Organic compound



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

4/20/06

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

P	C	B	S	■	O	H	A	R	A	■	F	A	S	T
E	R	R	S	■	T	A	M	E	R	■	A	N	T	I
R	O	U	N	D	T	R	I	P	T	I	C	K	E	T
F	U	N	■	N	O	R	■	■	S	T	E	L	L	A
O	P	E	R	A	■	I	D	I	■	S	T	E	E	N
R	I	T	E	■	I	S	E	R	E	■	■	S	S	S
M	E	T	E	R	S	■	L	O	A	C	H	■	■	■
■	R	E	V	O	L	V	I	N	G	D	O	O	R	■
■	■	■	E	M	E	E	R	■	L	I	M	B	E	R
C	H	A	■	■	T	R	I	T	E	■	E	L	L	E
H	A	L	T	S	■	B	A	R	■	P	R	I	E	D
A	R	B	O	R	S	■	■	E	V	E	■	G	A	R
S	P	I	R	A	L	S	T	A	I	R	C	A	S	E
T	E	N	T	■	A	B	A	T	E	■	E	T	E	S
E	R	O	S	■	G	A	R	Y	S	■	L	E	S	S

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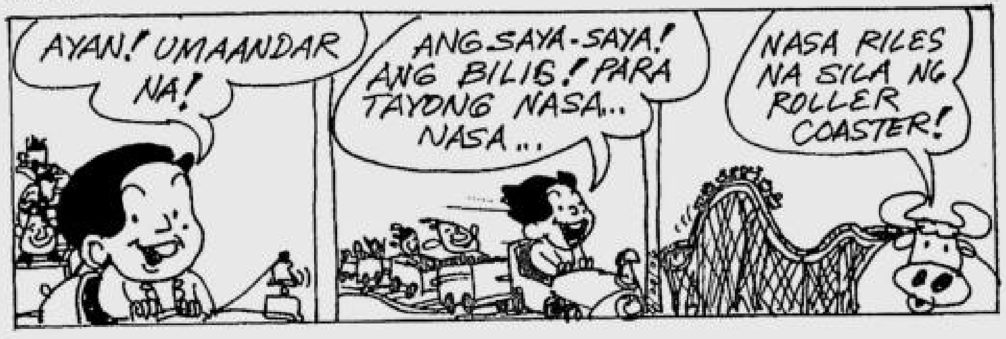
4/20/06

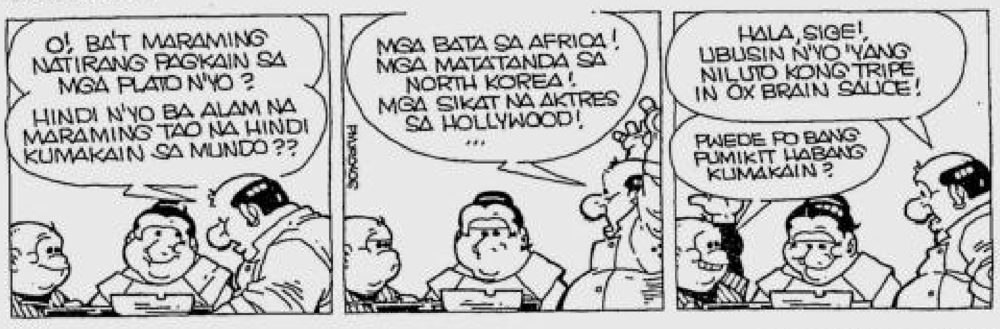
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


AYAN! UMAANDAR NA!
ANG SAYA-SAYA! ANG BILIS! PARA TAYONG NASA... NASA...
NASA RILES NA SILA NG ROLLER COASTER!

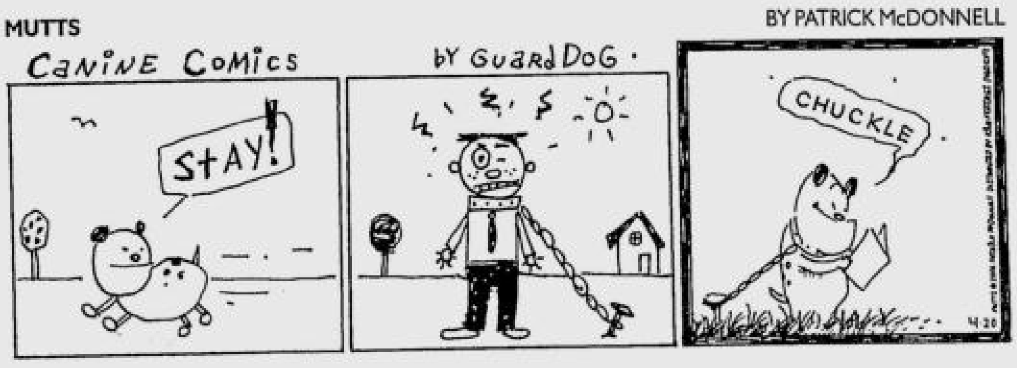
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


O!, BA'T MARAMING NATIRANG PAGKAIN SA MGA PLATO N'YO ?
HINDI N'YO BA ALAM NA MARAMING TAO NA HINDI KUMAKAIN SA MUNDO ??
MGA BATA SA AFRICA! MGA MATATANDA SA NORTH KOREA! MGA SIKAT NA AKTRES SA HOLLYWOOD! ...
HALA, SIGE! UBUSIN N'YO 'YANG NILUTO KONG TRIPE IN OX BRAIN SAUCE!
PWEDE PO BANG PUMIKIT HABANG KUMAKAIN ?

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


CaNiNE CoMics
bY GuaRdDoG ·
StAY!
CHUCKLE
4-20

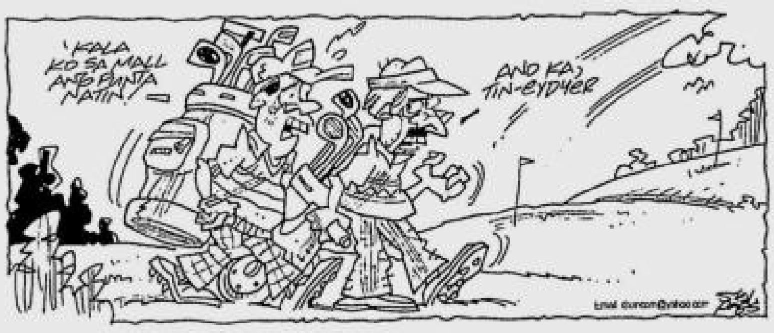
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ALAM MONG TUMATANDA KA NA KUNG

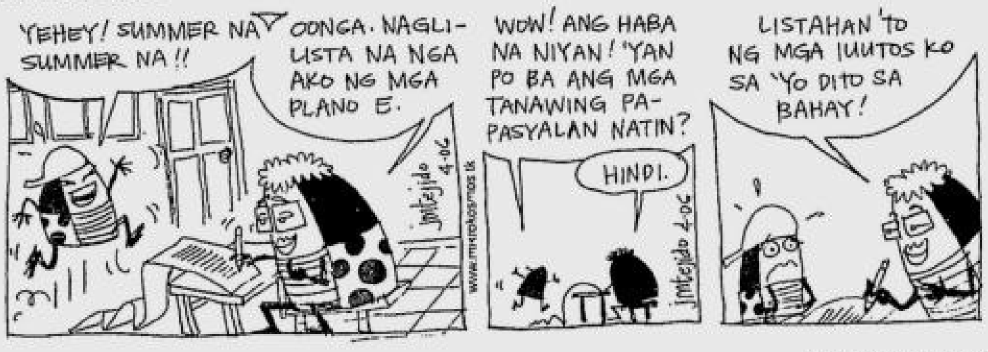
....

MAY NAG-AANYAYA NA SA 'YONG MAGLARO NG GOLF


'KALA KO SA MALL ANG PUNTA NATIN!
ANO KA, TIN-EYDYER

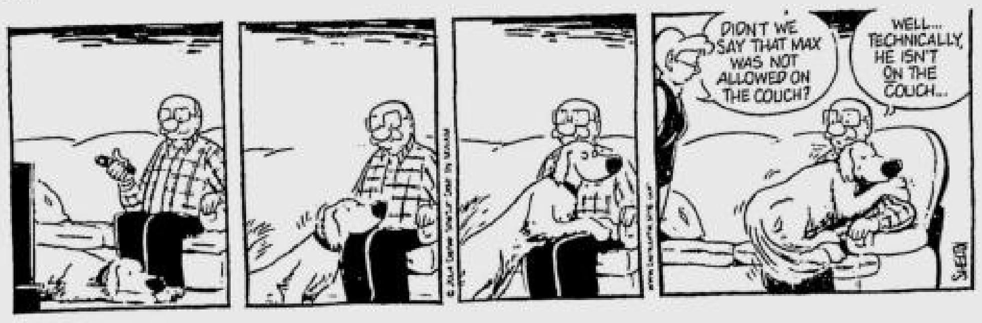
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


YEHEY! SUMMER NA SUMMER NA!!
OONGA. NAGLI-LISTA NA NGA AKO NG MGA PLANO E.
WOW! ANG HABA NA NIYAN! 'YAN PO BA ANG MGA TANAWING PA-PASYALAN NATIN?
HINDI.
LISTAHAN 'TO NG MGA IUUTOS KO SA 'YO DITO SA BAHAY!
www.mikrokosmos.tk

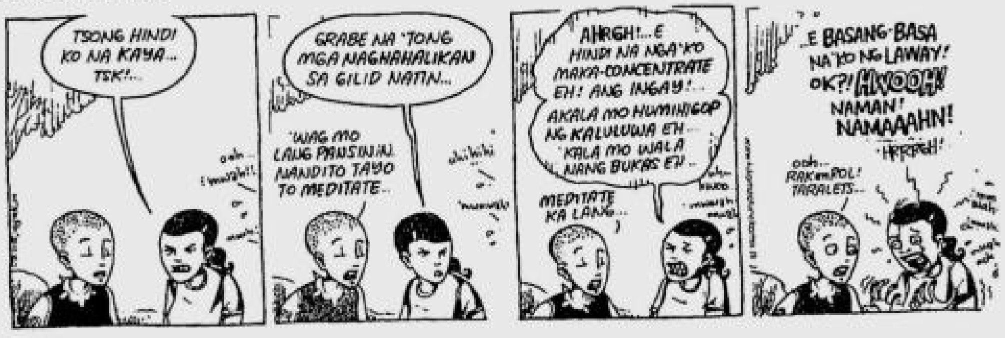
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


DIDN'T WE SAY THAT MAX WAS NOT ALLOWED ON THE COUCH?
WELL... TECHNICALLY, HE ISN'T ON THE COUCH...

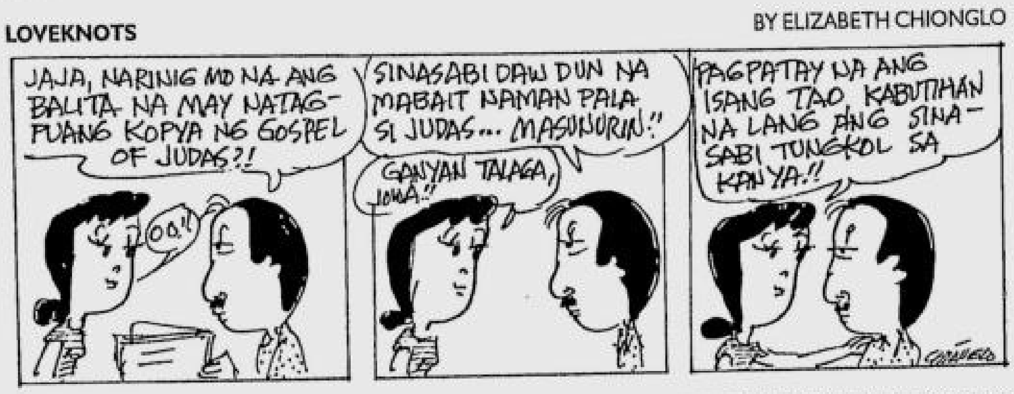
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TSONG HINDI KO NA KAYA... TSK!...
GRABE NA 'TONG MGA NAGHAHALIKAN SA GILID NATIN...
'WAG MO LANG PANSININ. NANDITO TAYO TO MEDITATE...
AHRGH!...E HINDI NA NGA 'KO MAKA-CONCENTRATE EH! ANG INGAY!...
AKALA MO HUMIHIGOP NG KALULUWA EH... 'KALA MO WALA NANG BUKAS EH...
MEDITATE KA LANG...
...E BASANG-BASA NA 'KO NG LAWAY! OK?! HWOOH! NAMAN! NAMAAAHN!
HRRRGH!
ooh... RAKenROL! TARALETS...

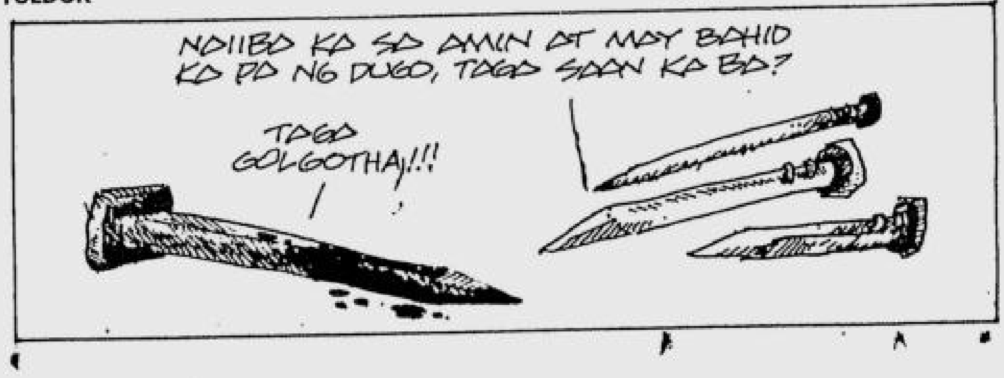
LOVEKNOTS

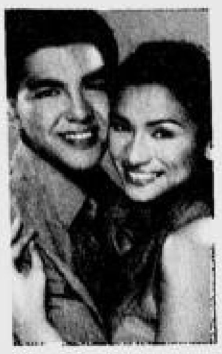
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, NARINIG MO NA ANG BALITA NA MAY NATAGPUANG KOPYA NG GOSPEL OF JUDAS?!
OO!
SINASABI DAW DUN NA MABAIT NAMAN PALA SI JUDAS... MASUNURIN!
GANYAN TALAGA, IOHA!
PAGPATAY NA ANG ISANG TAO, KABUTIHAN NA LANG ANG SINASABI TUNGKOL SA KANYA!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NAIIBA KA SA AMIN AT MAY BAHID KA PA NG DUGO, TAGA SAAN KA BA?
TAGA GOLGOTHA!!!



MARK Herras and **Jennylyn Mercado**

'Star-struck' host . . .

From page A2-6

bigwigs **Lance Gokongwei** and **Edwin Totanes**, along with media and show biz celebrities and a bevy of beautiful people attended the scintillating event. After sundown, the day's Fun Slam Challenge mini-Olympics segued into the Teazz Dance Party hosted by ace DJ **Steve Mills.** Both events had a lot of excited participants, the winners received cash prizes! Kudos to URC's beverage department for coming up with yet another surefire way to quench our thirst!

Star texts

Fr Lorna T: " Rudy and I finally went home last Monday after a month in the hospital. Thank you for the love & prayers. Pls continue to pray for Daboy's complete recovery."

Fr **Regine Tolentino**: "I'm inviting all kids and teens to join my summer dance workshops at 47 Victoria St. cor. 12th St New Manila from April 19-28 and May 1-12. Participants will have a live TV recital on "Unang Hirit" on May 15. For details call 7238289."

ALIYAH Parcs

From **Katkat de Castro**: " My new reality TV travel show with **Franzen Fajardo** starts airing on April 23 after Pinoy Big Brother Teen Edition. Pls watch it"

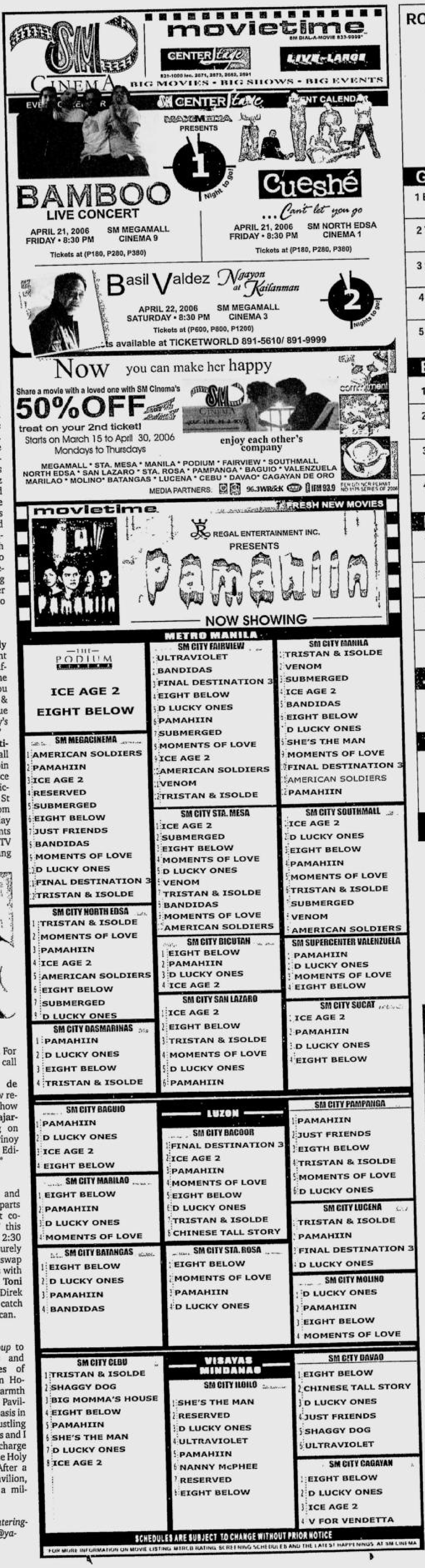
'E.T.K.'

I am nervous and excited in equal parts to be the guest co-host on "E.T.K" this Sat (ABS-CBN 2:30 p.m.). It will surely be a delight to swap show biz stories with **Ogie Diaz, Toni Gonzaga** and **Direk Joey Reyes.** Do catch the show if you can.

Personal

Merci beaucoup to **Veggie Flores** and **Benny Rosales** of Manila Pavilion Hotel for their warmth and kindness. Pavilion is truly an oasis in the heart of bustling Manila. My kids and I were able to recharge there during the Holy Week break. After a stay at the Pavilion, you feel like a million!

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)



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CINEMA 3
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9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 D LUCKY ONES
11 FINAL DESTINATION 3
12 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 PAMAHIIN
4 ICE AGE 2
5 AMERICAN SOLDIERS
6 EIGHT BELOW
7 SUBMERGED
8 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 PAMAHIIN
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 BANDIDAS
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 D LUCKY ONES
6 PAMAHIIN
7 SUBMERGED
8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
9 ICE AGE 2
10 AMERICAN SOLDIERS
11 VENOM
12 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 ICE AGE 2
2 SUBMERGED
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 D LUCKY ONES
6 VENOM
7 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
8 BANDIDAS
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 AMERICAN SOLDIERS

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 ICE AGE 2
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 D LUCKY ONES
6 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY MANILA
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 VENOM
3 SUBMERGED
4 ICE AGE 2
5 BANDIDAS
6 EIGHT BELOW
7 D LUCKY ONES
8 SHE'S THE MAN
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 AMERICAN SOLDIERS
12 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 ICE AGE 2
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 PAMAHIIN
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
7 SUBMERGED
8 VENOM
9 AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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1 PAMAHIIN
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY SUCAT
1 ICE AGE 2
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 EIGHT BELOW

LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 PAMAHIIN
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 ICE AGE 2
4 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY MARILAO
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 BANDIDAS

SM CITY BACOOR
1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 ICE AGE 2
3 PAMAHIIN
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 EIGHT BELOW
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
8 CHINESE TALL STORY

SM CITY STA. ROSA
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 PAMAHIIN
4 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 PAMAHIIN
2 JUST FRIENDS
3 EIGTH BELOW
4 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY LUCENA
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 PAMAHIIN
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY MOLINO
1 D LUCKY ONES
2 PAMAHIIN
3 EIGHT BELOW
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 PAMAHIIN
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 D LUCKY ONES
8 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY ILOILO
1 SHE'S THE MAN
2 RESERVED
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 ULTRAVIOLET
5 PAMAHIIN
6 NANNY McPHEE
7 RESERVED
8 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY DAVAO
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 CHINESE TALL STORY
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 JUST FRIENDS
5 SHAGGY DOG
6 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY CAGAYAN
1 EIGHT BELOW
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 ICE AGE 2
4 V FOR VENDETTA

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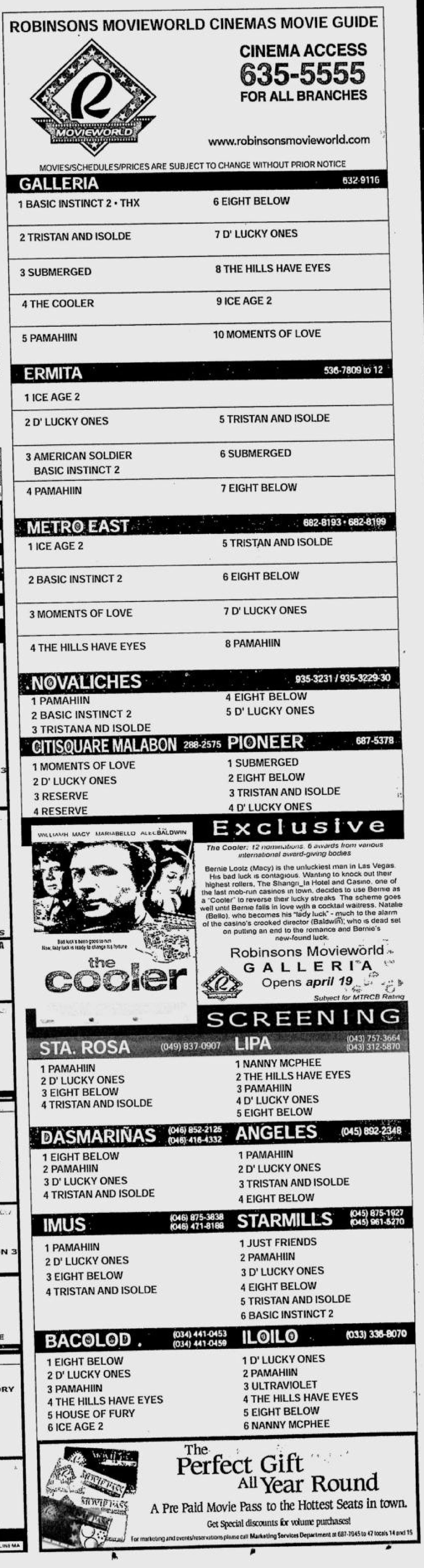

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4 THE COOLER
5 PAMAHIIN
6 EIGHT BELOW
7 D' LUCKY ONES
8 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
9 ICE AGE 2
10 MOMENTS OF LOVE

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 ICE AGE 2
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 AMERICAN SOLDIER
BASIC INSTINCT 2
4 PAMAHIIN
5 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
6 SUBMERGED
7 EIGHT BELOW

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1 ICE AGE 2
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
5 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
6 EIGHT BELOW
7 D' LUCKY ONES
8 PAMAHIIN

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30
1 PAMAHIIN
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 TRISTANA ND ISOLDE
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 D' LUCKY ONES

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

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2 EIGHT BELOW
3 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
4 D' LUCKY ONES

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2 PAMAHIIN
3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

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2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
4 EIGHT BELOW

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3 EIGHT BELOW
4 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

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6 BASIC INSTINCT 2

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3 PAMAHIIN
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ENTERTAINMENT

BEBONG Muñoz, Emilio Estevez and Jolina in a Soho restaurant.

'Starstruck' host star-struck in New York

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

IN SPITE OF ALL THE FAME JOLINA Magdangal is enjoying, she remains childlike. Jolens relishes simple joys.

She sent this text to me all the way from the Big Apple where she is shooting for her upcoming TV series, "I Love New York," with **Marvin Agustin, Jennylyn Mercado** and **Mark Herras.** "My boyfriend Bebong & I went to Soho. I wore boots so that I wouldn't look too small beside him but *di ko rin kinaya sa dami ng lakaran dito* (I couldn't cope with all that walking) so I ended up buying slippers to change into. *Sobrang ganda ng* Soho. So artsy! We went to a small resto to have wine. *Grabe!* I almost fainted when I saw Emilio Estevez inside! *Nagpa*-picture *talaga kami. Di ako nagpaawat!*" Isn't it cute that the bubbly host of "Starstruck" was starstruck herself?

Jennylyn Mercado will have a birthday concert on May 15 at Music Museum—"The Music in Me," with guests **Janno Gibbs, Aiza Seguerra, Mark Herras** and Hale. It will be her first venture as a producer. Will she finally reveal her special someone (a non-show biz guy) during the concert? Jen is also set to open her boutique, featuring her own fashion line, "Ms Jennylyn" at Star Mall on May 27. Many guys out there dream of making her "Mrs. Jen" but that will have to wait. This wise pretty miss does not want to miss out on all the opportunities fate is throwing her way.

Just asking

Is it true that a young actor took a video of **JR** getting wild with a girl when he had a few too many in a Boracay bar last Holy Week? Will the "R & B Prince" be R and B about it—reticent and blasé?

Aliya Parcs flew to the US to visit her beloved **Vince** of "South Border." The band is on a tour of the States. Does that mean his wife and two kids are already out of the picture? Heard that Vince is seeking annulment. Marriage without love or love without marriage?

Does newscaster **Michael Fajatin** know that a video of his bloopers is circulating on the Internet and cell phones? That's bad news for any news practitioner!

Teazz on Bora

The long, hot summer brought everyone out to the country's foremost beach, Boracay, in droves. One scintillating event on the world-famous island over Easter vacation was the launch of URC's Teazz—The Green Tea with a Fizz. URC

STARSTRUCK/ A2-5

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4 PAMAHIIN

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4 EIGHT BELOW
5 AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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3 PAMAHIIN
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5 COED SCANDAL

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4 D' LUCKY ONES

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2 BANDIDAS
3 PAMAHIIN

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1 EIGHT BELOW
2 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

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1 NANNY MCPHEE
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D' LUCKY ONES

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2 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 PAMAHIIN

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Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271
1 PAMAHIIN
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Centre Plaza Cinema
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1 ICE AGE 2
2 PAMAHIIN

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 PAMAHIIN

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) JUST FRIENDS
2 U-BELT
3 BASIC INSTINCT 2
4 (DTS)

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1 (DOLBY) EIGHT BELOW
2 PAMAHIIN
3 (DTS) D' LUCKY ONES
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 ULTRAVIOLET

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1 EIGHT BELOW
2 BIG MOMMAS HOUSE 2
3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 PAMAHIIN

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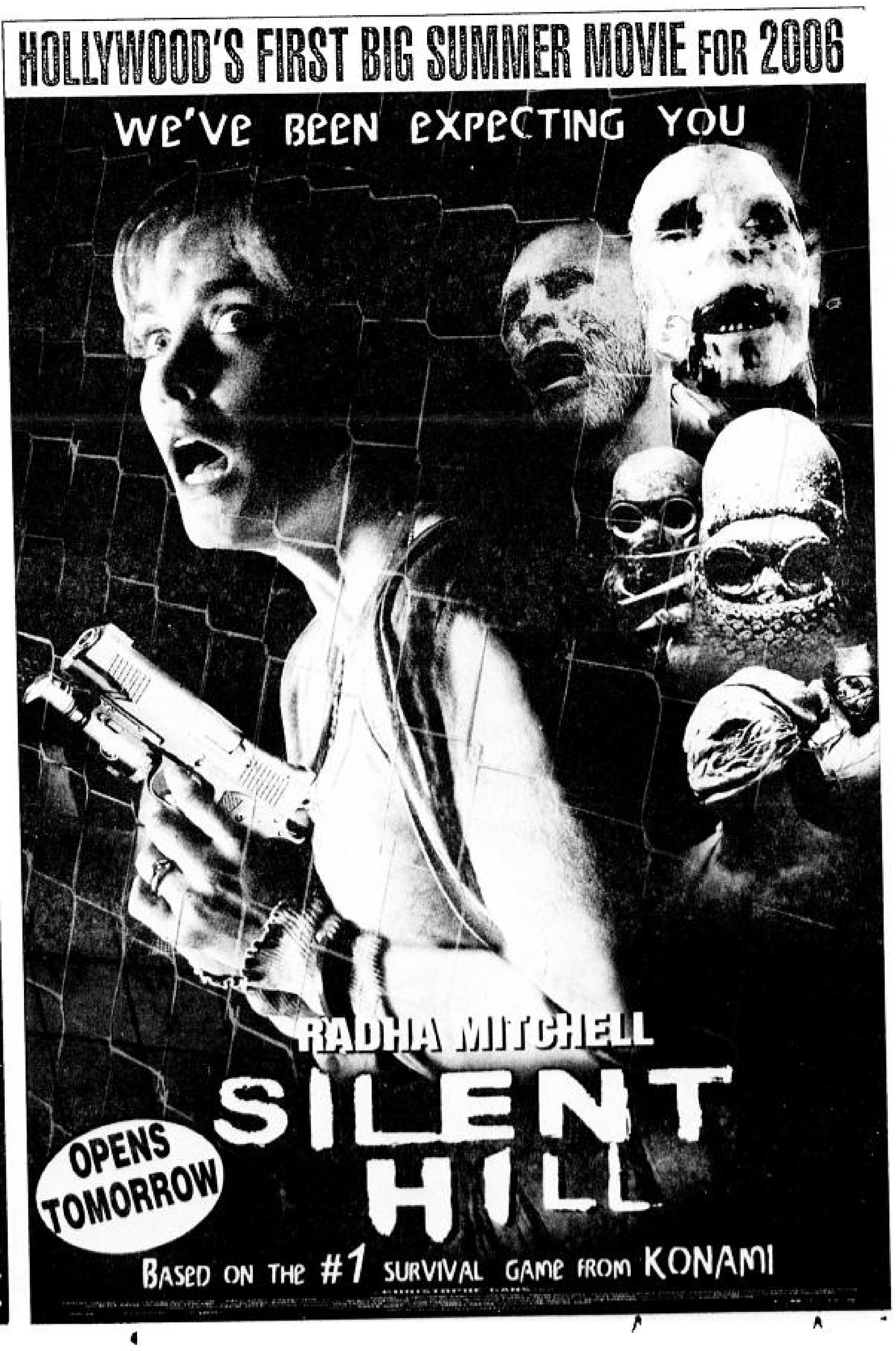
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Peso seen strengthening to 48 to $1

RACHEL Sabanis earns P23 for every meter of dyed buri fiber that she weaves into a placemat. She and the other women make table runners, bags, curtains, wall hangers and other items using Palawan's indigenous fiber. LYN RILLON

Forex traders say worst is over on fiscal front

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOREIGN EXCHANGE TRADERS ARE BULLISH ON THE PESO DEspite skyrocketing oil prices, believing the worst is over on the fiscal front and the government is in a much better financial position to boost infrastructure spending.

In a press briefing yesterday, ACI Philippines president and Banco de Oro Private Bank treasurer Jose Emmanuel Hilado said once the "political circus" has been settled and charter reforms set in motion, the peso could rise further to 48 to 49 to a dollar.

"We used to be called the 'Argentina of Asia' because we were following Argentina's predefault debt path. Now, we have shaken that tag off and emerged as the new darling of the global financial market. Everybody is very upbeat on the Philippines," he said.

ACI, a Paris-based global association of currency traders from 65 countries, will hold its 45th World Congress at the Philippine International Convention Center on May 25-27. The event is expected to draw about 500 foreign and local financial market leaders.

ACI World Congress 2006 chair Jose Arnulfo Veloso, treasurer at HSBC Philippines, said the peso had remained steady despite the political disturbances in the past weeks.

"This signifies the growing confidence of investors in the Philippine financial markets, much of which is a result of the government's bullish attitude when it comes to solving the fiscal crisis," Veloso said.

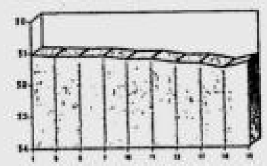
The HSBC treasurer, who had predicted that the peso would surge further to 47.50:$1, said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas might even tolerate a stronger peso because this was a way to curb inflationary pressures by offsetting the adverse impact of rising oil import bill.

Veloso said the peso's uptrend was support-

PESO/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



₱51.32 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 19, 2006

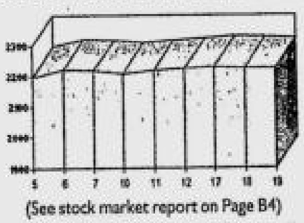
¥117.01 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 19, 2006

GOLD: $614.30-614.80

per ounce Hong Kong, April 18, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks slip on profit-taking

STOCKS DIPPED SLIGHTLY yesterday as profit-taking from the index's rise to its highest level in 6 1/2 years was offset by buying in blue chips.

Some traders said the market's decline for the second session in a row indicated the market was building a base for a sustainable rally.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index declined 1.99 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,223.73 after shedding 0.2 percent on Tuesday. It rose Monday to its highest since Aug. 26, 1999.

STOCKS/ B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

Expanded VAT nets P12.1B /B2

BREAKTIME
Drunken sealer /B2

Regulators agree to share info to protect investors /B8

Minimum capital for new insurers raised to ₱1B

THE INSURANCE COMMISSION HAS approved an increase in the minimum capitalization for all new insurance players to P1 billion to ensure that only strong players would join the industry.

The minimum capital for a non-life insurer previously stood at only P50 million and for life insurer, P100 million.

At the sidelines of the Financial Sector Forum yesterday, Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo said the P1-billion minimum capitalization, to take effect on July 1, was supported by the insurance industry.

Of the P1 billion, half should be paid up while the other half should be in the form of contributed surplus such as preferred stocks, Escobillo said. The new minimum capitalization was much higher than the benchmarks for startup life and non-life insurers earlier considered, the highest of which was only P500 million.

Escobillo said a new player would need sufficient capital primarily to build up its marketing and distribution channel, make a lot of investment and comply with the new International Accounting Standards.

"When we made financial computations for a company to grow and develop distribution and (absorb) startup costs and protection of proper sol-

MINIMUM/ B4

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Expanded VAT nets ₱12.1B

Gov't sees higher collection in coming months

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT COLLECTED P12.1 billion in additional revenues from the VAT Reform Law in the four months since its implementation in November last year, the Department of Finance announced yesterday.

The VAT law, considered the centerpiece of the Arroyo administration's fiscal reform program, expanded the coverage of the value-added tax to include oil and electricity, among others. It has also raised since Feb. 1 the tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent.

Of the total additional collections, the Bureau of Internal Revenue accounted for P1.3 billion while the Bureau of Customs contributed P10.8 billion.

The DOF said in a report that gross collections from the VAT Reform Law for the November-to-February period stood at P15.5 billion, but that the amount was trimmed to P12.1 billion because of the implementation of measures to mitigate the impact of the tax measure on consumer's purchasing power.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said some P3.4 billion worth of potential revenue collection was foregone due to the mitigating measures. He said the reduction of excise tax on petroleum products led to P2.6 billion worth of lost potential revenues, while the repeal of the franchise tax on power distribution resulted in P700 million in waived taxes. The lifting of the common carriers tax on domestic transport led to P25.1 million in foregone revenues, he added.

The Arroyo administration has vowed that the tax measure would deliver P75 billion in additional revenues for the whole of 2006 alone. Proceeds of the new VAT law are intended to boost the government's chances of wiping out the government's budget deficit by 2008 and increase spending on infrastructure and social services.

Despite criticisms from consumer groups and some members of the legislature, the administration's economic officials have stood behind the tax measure until its enactment into law, giving the promise that it would substantially help in putting the country's fiscal house in order.

However, meeting the full-year target of P75 billion seems not too easy for the government. In the January-February period alone, combined collections of the BIR and Customs stood at only P7.6 billion, slightly missing the P7.7-billion target set for the first two months to keep the government on track of the full-year goal.

But Beltran expressed optimism that the collections from the new VAT law would increase in the next few months as the BIR implements tighter tax-auditing schemes.

The government's ability to collect the expected revenues from the VAT Reform Law is tightly watched by the country's creditors, investors and credit-rating agencies.

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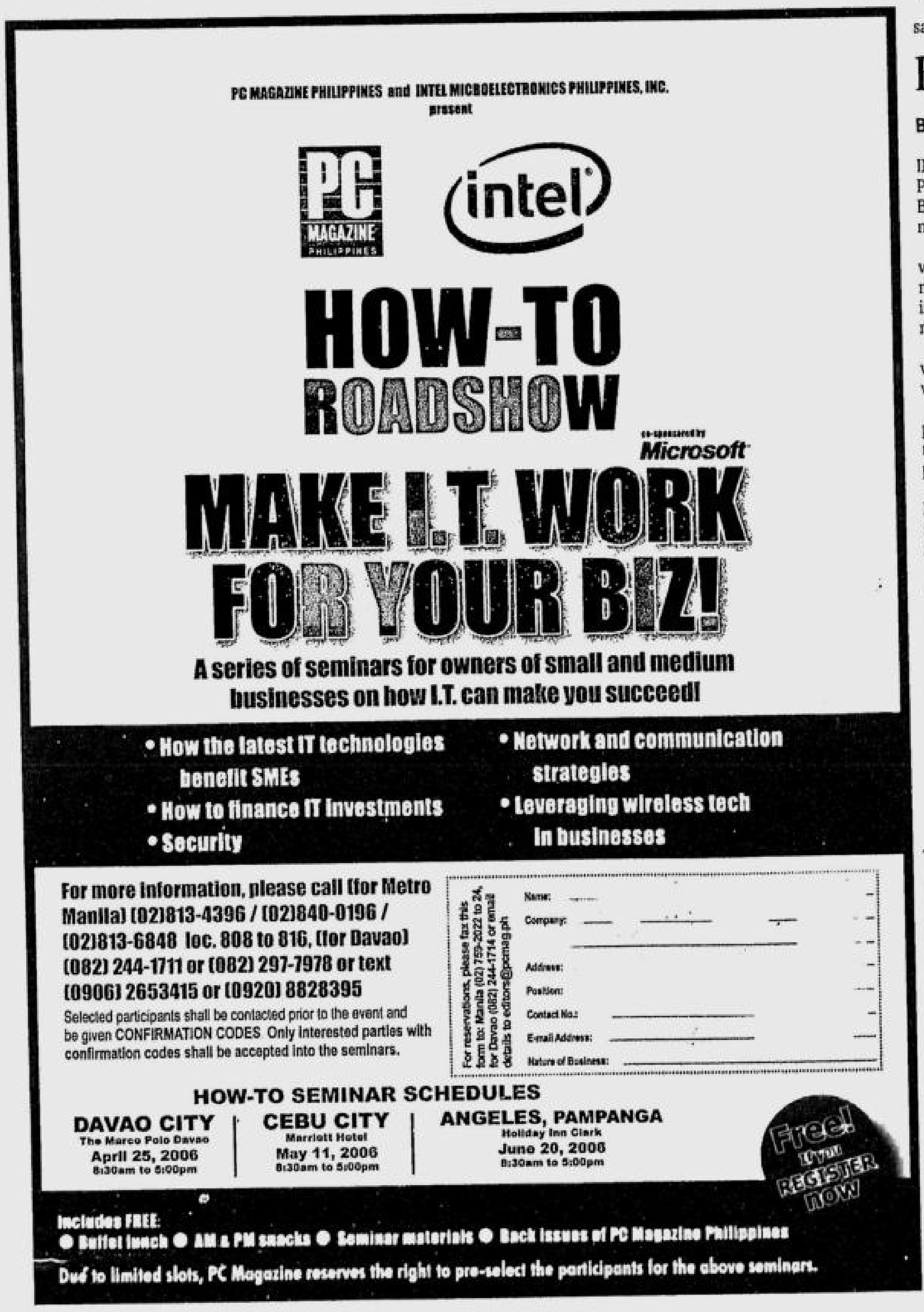
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Drunken sealer

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

TWICE IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS, THE SM group of mall operator Henry Sy actually offered to buy the pension fund GSIS out of the ripe-for-the-picking Equitable PCI Bank.

The SM group also offered to pay for the GSIS holdings in EPCIB a fantastic price of P92 a share. That was in November last year.

Only a few weeks ago, however, as the SM group's covetous designs for EPCIB became public knowledge, it raised the offer price to P95 a share.

Apparently, as early as November last year, the SM group's Banco de Oro president Nestor Tan was negotiating with Garcia on the buyout at such a fantastic price.

Subsequently, as the heat turned up on the SM group's plan, it again offered to buy out GSIS at P95 a share—cash, payable in one year.

And so Garcia turned the table around and offered to buy out the SM group under the same terms. The group said, sure, but payable in six months, which it shortened to three months, which in turn became one month.

In short, the SM group did not want to sell out. It only wanted to take over EPCIB by hook or by crook—or by political clout, aided by monetary consideration.

To me, as I follow this SM group's attempt to put one over us members of the pension funds, Garcia is keeping a bombshell.

Watch out, boss, because the SM group's secret offers are the "aces" that GSIS president and general manager Garcia intends to reveal to the public soonest.

By divulging some more secrets to the public, Garcia perhaps intends to put the "attack dogs" of the SM group on the defensive.

* * *

AS EVERYBODY knows, except perhaps those people in Malacañang, the SM group launched a different PR line of attack against Garcia.

It tried to shoot down Garcia's supposed deal with the "secret" buyer of the billions of pesos worth of GSIS holdings in EPCIB.

In effect, the PR line projected Garcia as a "bluffer." You know—that he really had no buyer, and if there indeed was one, that it must be a "drunken" buyer.

Well, Garcia said that the buyer was willing to pay for the EPCIB shares of GSIS a price of P92 a share—CASH!

That was indeed a fantastic price—at least compared to the SM group's pricing for EPCIB shares.

In the SM group's scheme in which its Banco de Oro takes over EPCIB, but calling it a "merger," the SM group offered a valuation price of P56 per EPCIB share—to be paid for with BDO shares.

Before the now-famous presidential elections in 2004, the SM group also tried to buy the EPCIB shares of the "other" pension fund SSS at a bargain price of P43 each.

And so how dare this Cebu hometown boy Garcia claim that he has a buyer for the GSIS shares in EPCIB at P92 per? It must be a drunken sailor or something.

* * *

NOW GARCIA stands in the way of Henry Sy's daughter Tessie Sy-Coson's bid to take over the country's 3rd biggest bank EPCIB for a song, by "merging" it with the 9th largest BDO.

But Garcia figured out—correctly, I must say—that under the scheme of Tessie Sy-Coson, the P20 billion in investments of pension funds SSS and GSIS could be signed, sealed, delivered to the SM group.

The funds could be locked in BDO for good, as minority stockholders. To the millions of working class GSIS and SSS members, there goes their money!

On the other hand, SSS president Corazon de la Paz already sided with the Sy family, apparently with the go-ahead from the Palace, possibly through the intercession of the two "godfathers" of the SM group for the takeover deal.

That's why, refusing to become the drunken sealer of the SM group deal, Garcia fought Tessie Sy-Coson, who was proclaimed by Fortune magazine as one of the 50 most powerful women in the world.

How dare this small fry fight the powerful SM group. He must be put in his proper "probinsiyano" place, right.

And so recently some attack dogs at the SEC put the pressure on Garcia.

Accusing Garcia of "price manipulation," as the price of EPCIB shares went up in the stock market, they ordered him to disclose the identity of the secret buyer.

That was a wrong move!

For now Garcia intends to turn the table around by revealing the "offer" of the SM group itself for the GSIS holdings in EPCIB at that "fantastic," "drunken-buyer" price of P92 a share and P95 each.

So who is drunk now?

* * *

THIS I KNOW for a fact: the GSIS has been buying EPCIB shares in the stock market, and it has not sold a single share.

And some lowlife in the SEC thought that it was price manipulation?

So where has this worm been hiding all along?

Look, there was and still is another group which actually transact in the stock market among themselves to depress the price of EPCIB shares.

Market talk has it that the name of one of them sounds German, and the other two seem to have some Swiss and Singaporean connections.

Everybody in the market knows that the group has been buying EPCIB shares from each other. And then they turn around to selling the same shares to each other at lower prices. And on and on!

That, for the information of the SEC, is called price manipulation.

* * *

ALL RIGHT, it is not yet known whether or not the SEC lowlife merely wanted to impress the SM group by accusing its mortal enemy Garcia of price manipulation.

But from what I gathered, the higher ups at the commission had no knowledge whatsoever of the apparent "shake-out" move against Garcia.

Just think of it for a moment—who stands to benefit if Garcia drops his guard in the fight against the SM group?

Benguet coal project attracts investors

By Christine A. Gaylican

INVESTOR GROUPS LED BY KOREA ELECTRIC Power Corp. (Kepco) have signified interest in Benguet Corp.'s Surigao coal project, a company official said.

The project, currently under exploration with an estimated coal reserve of 31.7 million metric tons, has caught the interest of several investors, Benguet president Philip Romualdez said in an interview.

"There are now preliminary discussions with these groups but we are carefully reviewing them all," he said.

Romualdez noted that the Surigao coal project was still "prime for additional exploration activities especially with government's promotion of coal-fired (power) plants."

"As crude oil prices remain high, properties like the Surigao coal (area) become increasingly valuable as we have seen in the case of Semirara (Mining Corp.)," he added.

Meantime, Benguet has also signed a memorandum of agreement with Eramen Minerals Inc., which controls the biggest nickel and cobalt properties in the Zambales area.

The agreement will promote the full exploration and development of Benguet's and Eramen's combined resources either through sale or the entry of joint-venture partners.

The nickel project has been approved by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Bureau of Mines and Geosciences for implementation through a mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA), which limits ownership to local companies.

Benguet has several new mineral prospects in Luzon and in Mindanao that would revive the glint of the 100-year-old mining company that pioneered the modern gold mining operation in the country.

Known as the biggest gold mining company in the Philippines and the 16th biggest in the world, Benguet Corp. has an existing chromite operation in Masinloc, Zambales, known internationally as "Masinloc Ore," and a highly profitable Dizon Copper-Gold operation in San Marcelino, Zambales.

Stocks slip on profit-taking

From page B1

"The market is consolidating, with the mining and oil sectors taking a breather," said Westlink Global Equities chair Rommel Macapagal.

Macapagal said he believed the market's upward trend remained intact given favorable economic fundamentals and technical factors.

Late Tuesday, President Macapagal-Arroyo said state revenue collection in the first quarter was stronger than last year, which bodes well for the government's campaign to improve its financial position.

That is important for efforts to bring down domestic interest rates, especially amid renewed upward pressure on global oil prices, which rose to record highs earlier this week. *AP*

Peso seen strengthening . . .

From page B1

ed by the positive story on Philippine fiscal consolidation, which should lure more investors since the tail-end of the US Federal Reserve's cycle of interest rate increases would prompt fund managers to look for better investment returns in emerging markets.

According to Hilado, the peso's sustained strength suggested that investors have started to take the Philippines more seriously despite all the political bickering. "Our foreign exchange rate has continuously declined from the 39 level in 1999 due to fiscal crisis and political instability. But today, from all indications, it looks like political instability no longer affects the financial industry," he said.

Veloso and Hilado said the financial markets would like to see the government not simply keeping the budget deficits in check but freeing up more funds for infrastructure in order to boost the investment climate.

"Before, the reason why they were able to contain the deficit was they cut expenses, but if they cut expenses, you hurt the economy," Hilado said.

"The next greatest challenge is how the government can increase government spending to perk up the economy," he said.

Despite the unending political noise in the Philippines, the peso hit three-and-a-half year highs and peaked at 50.88:$1 so far this year.

"This is a positive sign that the currency markets have matured and are behaving more like markets in more advanced countries," Hilado said.

The Philippines became a member of ACI in 1963, the first Asian country to be part of the global organization at that time that it was a leading financial center in the region. The country is set to host the annual ACI World Congress for the first time.

Fair trade advocates call for clear policy on duties

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FIVE UMBRELLA GROUPS OF fair trade advocates and industries yesterday joined forces in asking the government for a clear policy on the World Trade Organization talks in Geneva that started yesterday.

The Fair Trade Alliance, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Philippine Industries, Philippine Exporters' Foundation and Alyansa Agrikultura said in a press briefing they wanted the duties applied in the country to be as far as possible from the maximum tariffs allowed under WTO rules.

In this way, the alliance said the government would have the maximum flexibility possible to increase tariffs to a level suited to the country's needs without being constrained by WTO bound rates.

The maximum duties allowed by the WTO are referred to as "bound" rates, while the difference between the bound and applied rates is called "policy space."

The bigger the space, the greater the flexibility for the government to adjust rates.

The alliance said the average applied rate for Philippine products in non-agricultural market access was 7 percent while the bound rate was 23 percent.

"We want the minimum to be 10 percent for non-agricultural products, but our officials seem to be willing to accept a minimum of 5 percent," said Ernesto M. Ordoñez, head of Alyansa Agrikultura.

Negotiators are in Geneva where talks on NAMA started yesterday, covering sectors such as fisheries, footwear, petrochemicals, iron and steel and automotive parts.

Ordoñez said advocates were disappointed with the apparent attitude of government negotiators of accepting what developed countries propose to be the minimum number of products spared from tariff cuts.

There are about 5,000 Philippine products covered in the NAMA talks and the advocates want at least 506 tariff lines to be part of the exclusion list.

The list covers items that would not be covered by tariff cuts.

FTA convenor Wigberto Tañada said the groups "felt distressed" that briefings conducted by the Department of Trade and Industry for business and civil society representatives covered only the identification of which products should go into the exclusion list and the likely "coefficients" would be used in the so-called Swiss formula.

The coefficients and the formula would determine the impact of tariff reductions on WTO members.

Earlier this month, FTA said negotiators should take a stronger stance on keeping as much policy space as possible in relation to NAMA tariff cuts.

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FLI registers 11% rise in net income

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY FIRM FILINVEST Land Inc. posted an 11 percent increase in its net income to P665 million in 2005, according to a preliminary information statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

FLI said sales grew 7 percent from projects of FLI's middle income unit Cortebella, such as Spring Country in Quezon City, Serra Monte Villas also in Quezon City and Fuente de Villa de Abrille in Davao.

Some of its projects under its affordable and socialized segments like Brookeside Lane, Crystal Aire and Beldevere Townhomes, all in Cavite, likewise performed well, the company said in its report to regulators.

New projects launched last year also performed well, the company claimed.

Major reasons cited for the favorable performance were attractive pricing, continuous marketing activities, promotions and incentives offered to both buyers and sellers, availability of financing packages and the positive market reception to house models.

Filinvest Development Corp., which owns 44.7 percent of FLI, in the meantime, said net income posted a 29-percent growth to P725 million in 2005.

KING JAMES
AUCTION CALENDAR

AUCTION TODAY
FURNITURES, FIXTURES & EQUIPMENT
ORIENT BANK
SITE LOCATION: 1281 G. ARANETA AVENUE, Q.C.
AUCTION DATE: APRIL 20, 2006 (THU) @ 10:30 AM
CONSISTING OF VAULTS, OFFICE TABLES, SWIVEL CHAIRS, OFFICE PARTITIONS, STEEL FILING CABINETS, CASH BOX, TYPEWRITERS, MONEY COUNTERS CHECK WRITERS, DEPOSIT SLIP COUNTERS, AIRCONDITIONS ETC.
REFUNDABLE / CONSUMABLE DEPOSIT OF P5,000

SEALED BIDDING
ICE PLANT BUILDING, MACHINERIES AND WAREHOUSE
(DIVERSION ROAD, LUCENA CITY, QUEZON)
SCHEDULE OF BIDDING: APRIL 21, 2006 (FRI), 2:00PM
VIEWING SCHEDULE: APRIL 17,18,19, & 20, 2006 9:00AM TO 5:00 PM
MINIMUM BID ₱4.8 M
BID BOND DEPOSIT: 10% OF TENDERED BID

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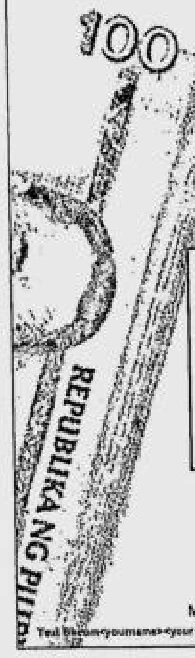
VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.kingjamesauction.com



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Globe widens Wi-Fi reach

By Daxim L. Lucas

A UNIT OF AYALA-OWNED GLOBE TELECOM Inc. has embarked on an aggressive campaign to expand its wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) service nationwide.

The Wi-Fi service allows users to connect wirelessly to the Internet in designated areas.

GlobeQUEST, the corporate business group of Globe subsidiary Innove Communications, at the same time established four domestic and international roaming partnerships that would allow seamless Internet connectivity to business travelers in the country and abroad.

The broadband campaign is part of the telecom firm's thrust into new revenue sources that would help it overcome plateauing demand for its mobile phone business.

"Innove's vision is to bring the Filipinos to the broadband age," GlobeQUEST head Jesus C. Romero said in a statement.

"To support this, GlobeQUEST provides broadband facilities like Wi-Fi to major key establishments where people converge for business, as well as promote Wi-Fi as a strategic tool for education, local government projects, product advertisements, and foreign ventures, among others."

GlobeQUEST has expanded to provide coverage in Metro Manila as well as 13 areas around the country, namely Cebu, Davao, Bohol, Bacolod, Tacloban, Pampanga, General Santos, Baguio, Olongapo, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna and Ormoc.

So far, the company has 275 wireless Internet zone "hotspots."

Romero expressed confidence that the company would reach the 500 mark by yearend.

Lafayette seeks OK for trial runs

LAFAYETTE'S RAPU RAPU POLYMETALLIC project is waiting for government permission to test its pollution control safeguards.

Lafayette chairman and president Carlos G. Dominguez said the new copper plant of Rapu Rapu Processing Inc., a Lafayette subsidiary, has installed all the required environmental measures.

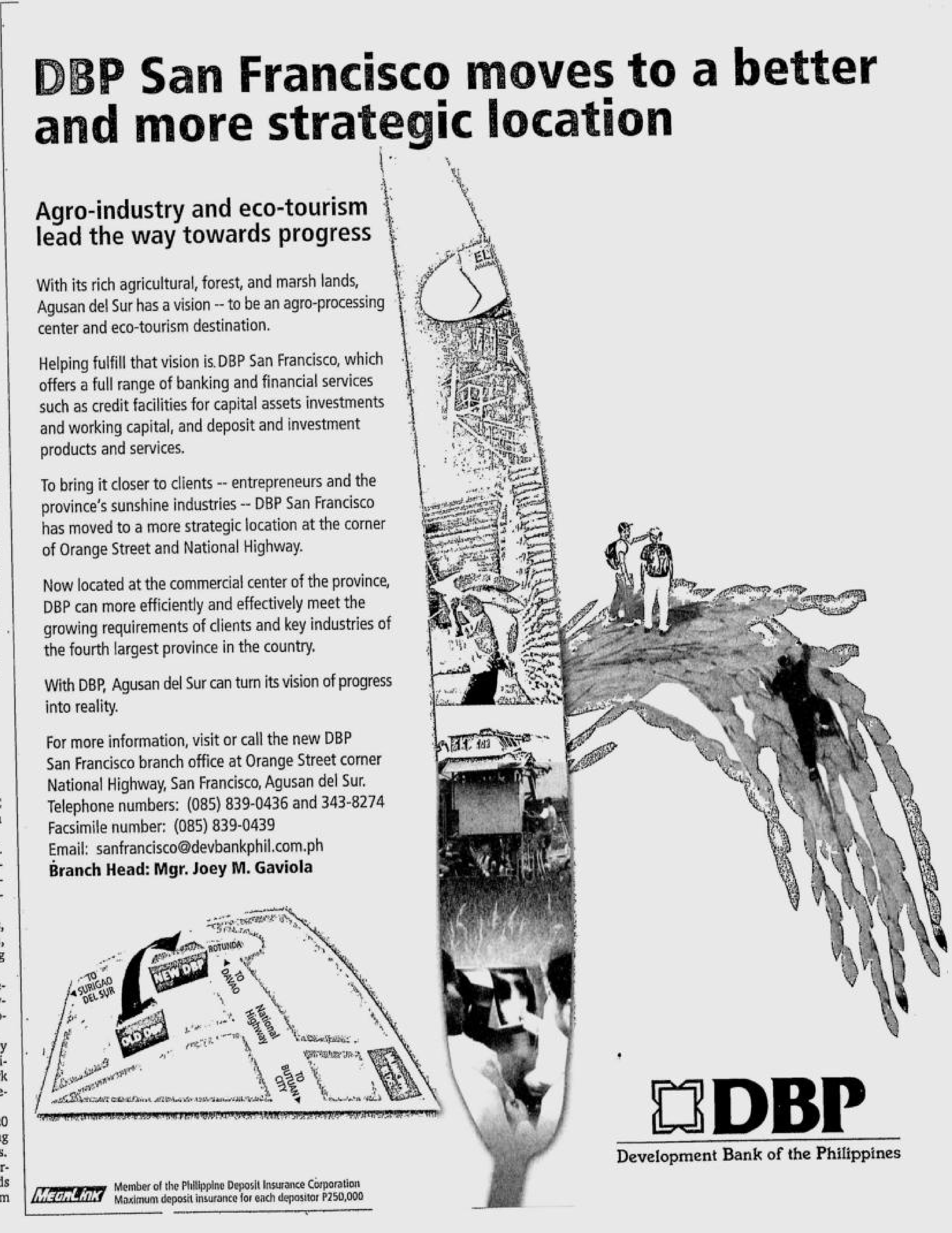
"But we need to test the whole process, which is standard practice all over the world, to make sure all systems are up and running according to specifications," he said.

Dominguez, who took over the management of Lafayette last January, has been saying the test runs would be open to all authorized and concerned parties.

He added that the company has already lined up various projects to improve the quality of life in its host communities and spark economic growth in the Southern Tagalog region.

The company expects to spend about P320 million each year just to buy supplies, including groceries, fish, and meat, from local businesses.

"We can do more once we are already operating because by then we shall have the funds to implement our plans to really transform the community," he said.



DBP San Francisco moves to a better and more strategic location

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Big investors seen cornering RTBs

Tanduay income up 12% in '05

LIQUOR FIRM TANDUAY HOLDINGS Inc. said its consolidated net income grew 12 percent to P736 million in 2005 from P660 million the previous year.

In a report to the Securities and Exchange Commission, the company said consolidated revenues 1 percent to P6.8 billion in 2005 from P6.76 billion in 2004.

An 8.6-percent rise in its average selling prices boosted revenues, it said. The volume of liquor sales, however, slid by 1.2 million cases or 7.5 percent.

The increasing prices of goods due to the rising cost of fuel resulted in the weakening of demand for rum.

Cost of sales rose 3 percent to P5.3 billion in 2005 from P5.1 billion in 2004 due to an 11 -percent increase in the costs of alcohol and packaging materials.

Operating expenses climbed 5 percent to P815 million due to higher advertising expenses for the promotion of the Five-year brand, Cossack Vodka and Guerrero Brandy.

At the parent company level, net income swelled to P1.8 billion from P619 million. Revenues—consisting of dividend income, management fees and interest—surged to P1.8 billion in 2005 from P600 million in 2004. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

SM unit posts 23% profit growth

SM DEVELOPMENT CORP., THE RESIDENTIAL property developer of retail tycoon Henry Sy, Sr., has posted a 23 percent growth in consolidated net income to P652 million in 2005 from P528 million in 2004.

In a report, the company said total revenue grew 19.6 percent to P867 million from 2004's P725.4 million. Gains on investments worth P318 million, it said, contributed to the surge in revenue during the year. Sales from real estate, which accounted for 25 percent of the total revenue, increased by 2.6 percent to P219 million.

Interest expenses of its wholly-owned SM Synergy Properties Holdings Corp. rose 44 percent to P22 million due to higher loans.

SM Synergy was formed to develop the 4.7-hectare mid-scale residential condominium on Doña Soledad Avenue Extension in Bicutan, Parañaque City dubbed Chateau Elysee.

Taxes and license fees paid also rose to P9.3 million or a 245-percent increase year-on-year due to a disputed idle land tax paid for a Tagaytay property and bigger local business taxes incurred during the year.

The company owns a parcel of land in Tagaytay City with an area of 31,498 square meters. The vacant lot was purchased at P304.6 million. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

BSP urges Treasury to tighten monitoring of bonds distribution

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS HAS ASKED the Bureau of the Treasury to tighten the monitoring of the distribution of retail treasury bonds (RTBs) as it raised concern that only a few small investors were able to avail themselves of these bonds.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said more than 80 percent of the RTBs issued by the government were being held by big and institutional investors--including banks, government-owned and -controlled corporations, and private corporations--and that only less than 20 percent were held by small investors.

"Since these are retail bonds and are meant to be held by small investors, the Monetary Board would like the Bureau of Treasury to closely monitor and improve the distribution of RTBs to ensure that these are sold to small investors," Guinigundo said in a letter to National Treasurer Omar Cruz.

RTBs, unlike other government securities, are intended for small investors to boost small businesses and encourage investments by individuals. The minimum allowable investment in RTBs is P5,000.

However, the BSP said, the purpose of issuing RTBs might be defeated, given that big investors were the ones holding the bulk of the RTBs issued.

In September last year, the Bureau of the Treasury sold P44.37 billion worth of RTBs to help plug a gaping budget deficit and, at the same time, provide investment opportunity for small investors.

Last year's budget deficit of the national government stood at P146.8 billion.

The issuance of RTBs last year was done following a directive from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to mobilize savings and investments.

In response to the BSP's concern, The Bureau of the Treasury said that while it was the intention of the government to distribute the bulk of the retail bonds to small investors, demand from this sector was not enough.

"You can't give it all to retail investors because the absorptive capacity is not there," Cruz explained.

But he clarified that the RTB holdings of small investors were not as small as the BSP suspects. He said many big investors redistributed the RTBs they get by selling them to small investors.

SMC special unit offers hybrid securities

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CAPITAL FUNDING LTD., A Cayman Islands-registered special purpose unit owned by food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., will issue hybrid securities this month to raise fresh funds for the parent firm, INQUIRER sources said.

While the size of the offering has yet to be set, the benchmark issue may be at least $300 million, the sources said.

In a separate disclosure, San Miguel chief finance officer Ferdinand Constantino said SMCF was planning to issue "a benchmark size offering of perpetual non-cumulative, non-voting preferred shares," which were 'callable' or can be paid in five years.

The hybrid securities would be a mix of debt and equity, which pay a fixed return that will be set later but is perpetual or has no fixed maturity.

Four foreign banks—Citigroup Global Markets Limited, Credit Suisse Securities (Europe) Limited, Deutsche Bank AG, Singapore Branch, and The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd.—were tapped as joint book-runners and lead managers for the offering.

Proceeds from the offering will be lent to SMC as a 30-year inter-company loan.

Industry sources said SMC would use the new loan to refinance existing loans.

In its third quarter financial report, San Miguel said its loans payable stood at P91.26 billion during the nine-month period in 2005, an increase of P65.5 billion from year-ago level. This was because of the bridge financing used by the company to acquire National Foods Ltd., and the additional borrowings for working capital requirements and prepayment of Ginebra San Miguel's long-term loans.

Sources said a roadshow for the issue was scheduled for today in Manila and Singapore, and Friday in Hong Kong.

The issue will be marketed to investors in Zurich and London next week. Pricing may also be done early next week, sources added.

In the meantime, certain wire agencies reported that Moody's Investors Service has assigned a (P)Ba3 foreign currency rating to the proposed preferred stock issuance of SMCF.

Moody's also assigned a Ba1 local currency corporate family and indicative foreign currency senior unsecured ratings to SMC. This is the first time Moody's has assigned ratings to SMC.

"The Ba1 local currency corporate family rating reflects the size, diversity, and profitability of San Miguel's operations, which encompass alcoholic beverages and soft drinks, food and packaging activities in the Philippines and as well as food and beverage operations in Australia," said Charles Macgregor, vice president and senior credit officer at Moody's, in a statement.

Putting numbers to good use

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

DURING THE INCEPTION PROCEDURES INvolved in the emission testing of motor vehicles, the importance of IT or information technology component is being repeated over and over.

The results of the emission testing done by all the private emission test centers nationwide are being uploaded to a central databank. The Land Transportation Office and other concerned departments will have full access to this valuable data.

In my many years of involvement in advocacy work, I had developed a love affair with numbers. This is because numbers are numbers and you have very little ground for quarrel about that. Numbers are significant tools in any advocacy endeavor because of the many interesting stories behind them. The stories vary and the degree of their values largely depend on how we use and interpret them.

Transportation Undersecretary Ricky Alfonso used this PETC database to good use—particularly in the analysis of the performance of the different emission centers and in tracking down anomalous testing transactions.

Emission testing performance

There are more relevant stories that these numbers can tell. The LTO, under Transportation Assistant Secretary Annelli Lontoc, can use this data to punish and call the attention of some LTO district officers who refuse to respect the law. This database when compared with the actual vehicle registration transactions of LTO will tell Asec Lontoc the sad story that there are many officers under her, especially in less urbanized cities and provinces, that think they are "above the law." These are the LTO officers that allow their offices to release registration certificates even without the mandatory emission testing. I am saying this because many of the provinces and smaller cities in Mindanao are so far away from the LTO of Imperial Manila. The numbers should be a cause for alarm. Some LTO people think they can afford to be complacent about street pollution concerns as they think these concerns are not serious problems in their areas. They think the air in their areas is not as dirty as that in Manila as they have fewer motor vehicles and larger tracts of land. This may be true for now but if we don't watch out, we will become like Manila soon.

Threats of air pollution

The increasing level of air pollution is threatening the well-being of city dwellers, as it impact on human health, and imposing direct economic costs. It also threatens long-term productivity investment.

Davao City has been classified as one of the TSP (total suspended particulates) hot spots in the country, having a high concentration of air pollutants in its environment.

According to a World Bank report, the estimated damage to human health—in terms of resulting deaths, chronic bronchitis, respiratory symptoms and cost of exposure to air pollution—in Davao City is the second highest among four cities at $85 million. Metro Manila is first with $392 million while the third and fourth are Cebu, $16 million, and Baguio, $9 million.

The 2002 National Air Quality Status Report would show that in five of the seven previous years, two cities in Mindanao exceeded or equaled the highest Metro Manila annual readings—Davao and Tagum in 1996 and Davao, again, in 1999.

This should merit our serious attention as it shows how air pollution threatens the well-being of Mindanawans.

Street pollution sources

Transport is a major source of air pollution. In 2003, there were 4.3 million registered vehicles in the country—36 percent are utility vehicles; 17 percent, cars; 6 percent, trucks; 1 percent, buses; 1 percent, trailers, and 36 percent, motorcycles and tricycles. Of all vehicles, 70 percent are gasoline-powered while the rest use diesel. Most of high mileage PUVs are diesel-powered and they emit a significant amount of fine particles of emission that cause pollution. PUVs outnumber cars by a ratio of 2:1.

In Mindanao, there were 609,817 registered vehicles in 2003 and 625,047 in 2004, or an annual growth of 11.45 percent. The population of Mindanao was projected to reach 20.289 million in 2005, growing by 2.11 percent annually.

Interestingly, the Mindanao LTO compliance ratings on mandatory emission testing as a prerequisite to vehicle registration range from a low of 40 percent to a high of 95 percent. A law is a law—so compliance must be 100 percent, don't you think so?

In 2001, the Metro Manila Development Authority conducted road side inspections and apprehensions of smoke-belchers. Some 8,470 utility vehicles, 4,256 buses, 1,334 jeepneys were apprehended. Guess what? 95.6 percent of the utility vehicles, 91.8 percent buses and 98.1 percent jeepneys failed!

Other mechanisms

Aside from strict compliance with the emission testing requirement for motor vehicles, there are other equally important support mechanisms to ensure cleaner air for us in Mindanao. One of these is a locally initiated roadside inspection and apprehension of smoke belchers by the LGU, LTO, DOTC, media and NGO similar to what MMDA did. This, I believe, will help clean the air in our major thoroughfares.

The LTO database should also be used to examine the performance of the LTO operated MVIS (Motor Vehicle Inspection System)—the entity that conducts emission testing of PUVs. These numbers will show us whether the MVIS is doing a good or a lousy job in testing the PUVs. These numbers can also tell us the compliance rating of the LTO offices.

Using these numbers might be our only hope to reward the good and to punish the bad. Political will is a matter of choice—it can be used for the good of the greater majority or for the survival of the few.

(E-mail comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 19, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34.5	35	34.5	35	276,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62	62.5	61.5	62	1,839,200
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	18	18	18	18	1,500
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.49	0.51	2,910,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	70	71	70	71	114,400
International Exch. Bank	32	32	32	32	14,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	39	38.5	39	995,900
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	52	52	52	52	500
Philippine National Bank	33	33	33	33	13,600
Phil. Savings Bank	37	37.5	37	37	8,300
Philippine Trust Co.	38	38	38	38	1,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.25	60,000
Security Bank Corp.	47	47	47	47	6,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	39	39	39	39	2,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	27.5	12,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3265	3265	3250	3250	700
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2140	2140	2140	2140	670
Ivantage Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.14	1.16	13,852,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44.5	45	44.5	45	150,700
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45.5	46	45	45	680,200
Manila Electric Co. A	13.5	13.5	13.25	13.5	26,900
Manila Electric Co. B	20	20	19.75	19.75	148,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.5	2,662,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.35	4.4	2,334,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.98	1	0.96	0.99	400,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	10,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	29,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20	20.75	20	20.75	70,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35.5	36	35.5	35.5	134,900
RFM Corp.	0.78	0.78	0.77	0.78	30,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.85	1,149,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	50,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60	59.5	60	116,200
San Miguel Corp. B	79	80	79	80	127,200
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.5	20.5	19.5	20.5	3,185,200
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	4,010,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.46	1.48	2,323,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.55	4.6	4.5	4.6	1,545,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3	3	3	3	76,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.8	90,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	1,500,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	2,000,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.42	0.46	0.42	0.46	380,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	30,000,000
Ayala Corp.	350	360	350	357.5	61,010
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	60,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	2,257,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.025	17,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.75	90,000
APC Group Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	1,730,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	168,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.95	480,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	100,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	4,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.96	0.97	1,510,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.85	3.7	3.8	6,128,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	251,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.28	1.3	1.26	1.3	805,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	5.9	6.4	5.9	6.3	1,592,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	80,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.08	25,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	3,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.14	0.14	7,500,000
SM Investments Corp.	215	216	214	215	70,400
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.5	0.5	30,000
Uniol Res. & Holdings Co	0.0625	0.0625	0.06	0.06	4,300,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.135	0.125	0.13	10,650,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.5	11.5	11.25	11.5	13,362,300
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.36	470,000
Belle Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.24	1.26	4,715,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	1,010,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.92	1.88	1.92	6,109,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.72	1.72	51,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	1,390,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.66	0.67	0.66	0.66	11,250,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	50,000
Filinvest Land, Inc.	1.42	1.44	1.4	1.4	1,487,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	100,000
Interport Res.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	5,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	55,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	50,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	18,940,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	760,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	8.6	8.8	8.6	8.8	1,206,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	7,820,000
SM Development Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	107,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.8	7,768,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	21,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.94	0.95	2,150,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	885	890	880	880	30,820
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.9	6,364,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1965	1965	1955	1955	23,580
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.195	0.195	2,050,000
Ionics Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	17,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.046	0.046	0.045	0.045	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.0525	0.05	0.05	21,400,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	281,000
Philweb Corp.	0.028	0.029	0.027	0.028	1,611,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	285,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	531,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.93	0.94	0.93	0.94	670,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	60,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,780,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.74	1.76	1.7	1.72	772,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	15,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	1,000,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.5	0.57	0.5	0.57	11,380,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	9	9	9	9	10,000
Ipeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	116,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.84	1.84	171,000
Paxys Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	39,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	3	3.2	2.8	3	8,469,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	3.05	3.5	2.8	3	3,357,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.01	0.01	0.0085	0.0085	286,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.8	2,556,000
Benguet Corp. A	14.75	14.75	13	14	329,600
Benguet Corp. B	36.5	36.5	36.5	36.5	4,400
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.28	2.28	1.84	1.84	361,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.41	0.42	0.37	0.37	99,060,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.43	0.44	0.4	0.41	59,540,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.03	0.03	0.027	0.028	1,204,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.034	0.034	0.031	0.032	598,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	626,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4	4.05	3.65	3.8	13,264,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4	4.05	3.65	3.85	18,813,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28.5	27.5	28	746,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.4	0.4	0.37	0.4	2,610,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.46	0.46	0.42	0.44	1,780,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated, Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	7,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	989,700,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	333,600,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.66	0.66	0.6	0.64	1,320,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	370,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	4.1	5.5	4.1	5.4	5,019,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
Pldt (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	11	11	11	11	1,000

CURRENCIES

April 19, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.811491	1.000000	51.4680
Japan	Yen	0.006922	0.008530	0.4390
United Kingdom	Pound	1.445184	1.780900	91.6594
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104635	0.128942	6.6364
Switzerland	Franc	0.638165	0.786411	40.4750
Canada	Dollar	0.711584	0.876885	45.1315
Singapore	Dollar	0.507594	0.625508	32.1936
Australia	Dollar	0.599063	0.738225	37.9950
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.152667	2.652731	136.5308
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.216374	0.266638	13.7233
Brunei	Dollar	0.506012	0.623558	32.0933
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000111	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.021445	0.026427	1.3601
UAE	Dirham	0.220946	0.272272	14.0133
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.232300	63.4240
Argentina	Peso	0.264329	0.325733	16.7648
Brazil	Real	0.380892	0.469373	24.1577
Denmark	Kroner	0.134042	0.165180	8.5015
India	Rupee	0.017997	0.022178	1.1415
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220964	0.272294	14.0144
Mexico	New Peso	0.074183	0.091416	4.7050
New Zealand	Dollar	0.509378	0.627707	32.3068
South Africa	Rand	0.134835	0.166157	8.5518
Korea	Won	0.000851	0.001049	0.0540
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024973	0.030774	1.5839

Minimum capital . . .

From page B1

vency, a company must have P1 billion," Escobillo said.

For existing insurers, Escobillo said the insurance agency would introduce a risk-based capitalization requirement effective July 1.

"For life, there are four major components in assessing or calculating required capital in accordance with the risk program, the biggest of which is asset deposit, then product pricing, interest rate sensitivity and operational risk," Escobillo said.

This is based on a formula which divides the capital by the risk base. *Doris C. Dumlao*

People, Events & Products

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aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Modern retail taps into PLDT Business Solutions

ONCE AGAIN, IT WAS AN ENLIGHTened entourage that made its way through PLDT Innolab, watching in quiet wonder as different cutting edge business solutions were revealed. This time the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) walked down corridors bedecked with past and present PLDT milestones.

From end to end of a veritable hall of history, PFA members first looked upon displays of past groundbreaking PLDT products and achievements, as well as their contributions to national development. After this trip down memory lane, the future beckoned around the corner.

PFA president Robert Trota was visibly impressed with PLDT's Next Generation Network (NGN) workstations, as well as call center applications at PLDT Innolab. He cited the growing importance of contact centers in Customer Relations Management (CRM) among local franchises. Full time customer service quality is a key differentiator among food franchises for example, even those with "different peak hours".

"This relentless innovation, incessant testing and development determine what goes out in the market. The different solutions are battle-tested for business deployment," added PLDT FVP for business solutions Nerissa Ramos.

As an organization, PFA aims to promote franchising as a tool for national development, as well as identify, assist, and develop Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) with the potential to franchise. On July 13 to 16, PLDT Business Solutions will further reinforce its support to the PFA by co-presenting the 2006 Philippine International Franchise Conference and Expo. PLDT Business Solutions partnership with the PFA has continued over the years and is getting stronger.

PLDT SVP for corporate business group Eric R. Alberto explained that "Progressive retailers know very well what the critical value of technology is. They know that a sale can rely heavily on a mere click of a button and that in this day and age of information and technology, retail trade innovations are the only way to go."

"Embracing and implementing technology as part and parcel of a retailer's business process, no longer becomes a choice but has now become an imperative to a retail player's strategic survival; and globally established retailing companies have proven that the use of technology has not only enriched their customer's in-store experience but also enabled them to build a loyal and stable customer base."

Alberto also pointed out that the really good news is that "these technologies are now available at your fingertips from PLDT Business Solutions."

TOYOTA
Service Skills Olympics
General Category

TOYOTA SERVICE SKILLS OLYMPICS

Toyota Motor Philippines Corp recently honored its service advisors and general job technicians during the annual Toyota Service Skills Olympics at its manufacturing plant in Santa Rosa city in Laguna. Service Advisor and general Job Technician champions from the 24 participating Toyota dealer network competed with one another to showcase their skills. This annual event shows that Toyota produces not only the best cars in the world, but also the best service advisors and general job technicians in the industry. The annual competition is also an avenue for Toyota network personnel to showcase their world-class skills and to enhance customer-driven attitude that they use in their daily tasks to better serve the customers. Toyota always stresses the value of achieving the highest level of technical and customer care skills among all team members, including dealer technicians and service advisors. Due to its training program and participation from its dealer network, Toyota has achieved the highest rank in automotive dealer service in the Philippines in the recent JD Power Customer Satisfaction Index Survey for two consecutive years.

ABS-CBN'S SAGIP KAPAMILYA GARNERS AN ANVIL

ABS-CBN vice president for government, corporate affairs and public relations Maloli Espinosa (middle) receives the Anvil Award of Merit for ABS-CBN Foundation campaign Sagip Kapamilya during the 41st Anvil Awards of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) held recently at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila. Sagip Kapamilya is the program mounted by ABS-CBN in response to the devastation brought about by major typhoons in 2004. Also in photo are (from left) Anvil Awards committee chair Joel Lacsamana, Anvil Awards adviser and former PRSP president Bert Pasquin, chairperson of the board of judges Justice Amado Valdez, and PRSP president Amylyn de Quiros.

The Westwood Lane: A world-class community in Pasig City

THE LAST AVAILABLE FIRST-CLASS RESIdential homes in Valle Verde VI, The Westwood Lane at No. 14 Firefly Street is a metropolitan community of 12 residential units - four duplex and four single-detached.

Each one of these units was feng shui-guided and masterfully planned to make the most out of every inch of space. There are three levels, with two rooms with toilet and bath in each of the upper levels, and one maid's room and toilet and bath in the basement. There's a 3-car garage in the single-detached and a two-car garage in the duplex units. The laundry area, dirty kitchen and pantry are also in the basement.

The ground floor is a showcase of elegance, from its welcoming mini-garden to its high-ceilinged, spacious interior -- a relaxing foyer, a dining room with a view of the garden outside, the clean kitchen with modular-type cabinets, and the all-imported fixtures in the toilet-and-bath.

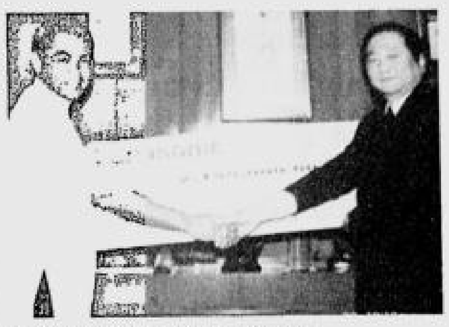
The second floor is another story with its romantic balcony, the master bedroom equipped with a monitor for surveillance cameras, the sub-master bedroom with a view of the living room, and the hallway overlooking the living room.

On the third floor are two more bedrooms, and a study room, a leisure room and a family hall, and another balcony.

The amenities are everything that you will find in world-class residences. All meant to provide every family the safety, comfort and convenience that they need.

The best part is that The Westwood Lane is just a stone's throw away from the commercial and business district that is Ortigas Center, and only a few minutes drive to SM Megamall, Edsa Shangri-La and Gateway, Cubao.

The Westwood Lane is a first-class project of BetterLand Development Corp, a subsidiary of So-En. More information about this project can be had at 716-6588 or 715-8547.



PANASONIC FOR LEYTE

Matsushita Electric Industrial Co Ltd (Japan) and Panasonic Group (Philippines) raised donations amounting to P2,155,000 to help in supporting minors orphaned by the recent Southern Leyte landslide. Photo shows Panasonic Manufacturing Philippines Corp president Seiichi Fukami (right) presenting the ceremonial check to the Diocese of Maasin Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas.

COCOLIFE, THE CITY OF LEGASPI FORGE MOA

Cocolife and The City Government of Legaspi forge an agreement for Cocolife's Employee Security Program (ESP) for First Class Cities and Municipalities. The ESP enables more than 500 employees of the City Government of Legaspi to have both life insurance and salary loan through automatic payroll deduction. Present during the signing were (standing from left) Cocolife South Luzon area head Benedict Moro, City Budget Officer Obelia Baldano, City Mayor Hon. Noel Rosal, Cocolife agency manager Arman Amenia, Legaspi branch manager Marco Antonio Soliman and underwriter Villardo Nuguit.

PSOF HAS NEW PRESIDENT

Barbie Atienza FPM, past president of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines, was recently elected unopposed as new president of the Philippine Society of Fellow in Personnel Management (PSOF). Also elected were vice president Moje Ramos-Aquino, secretary Lulu Fernando, treasurer Danny Pancho and PRO Dr. EG Ong. The society is an exclusive organization of accredited human resource management practitioners who have distinguished themselves in the profession. It is responsible for bestowing among certified members the suffixed titles Fellow in Personnel Management (FPM) and Associate Fellow in Personnel Management (AFPM), exclusively reserved for some 200 top HRM professionals in the country.

ECOMMUNIC8 IS THE BEST

Among the many well-respected, award-winning companies that vied for the recognition, Mannasoft Technology Corp's homegrown business solution eCommunic8 stood out and was hailed as the Best Product/Service in Wireless/Mobile Application during the e-Services Philippines: 6th Outsourcing Conference and Exhibition on Feb. 16, at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel. Shown are Mannasoft Technology Corp's AVP Mel Yuson (1st from left) accepting the award presented by DTI Regional Operations Usec. Carrissa Cruz, Asec and Citem Executive Director Felicitas R. Agoncillo-Reyes, Sun Microsystems president (judge) Cynthia Mamon, and Media G8way chair (judge) Ibarra Gutierrez.

ProductFILES

Benefits of coconut fiber

A LOT OF ARTICLES and research findings have shown the benefits of a regular intake of fiber in the diet. In a study on cardiovascular disease, a high-fiber diet was associated with a 21 percent lower risk of heart disease. Eight grams of fiber can easily be added to the diet by substituting whole wheat foods, such as coconut. Nutrition experts suggest that we should take between 20 and 35 grams of fiber a day. That would be an ideal number but doing so is seemingly hard. However, increasing your fiber intake by even a small amount can have beneficial effects on heart health. Adding as little as 2 to 3 tablespoons of coconut fiber a day to your diet may be all you need to take advantage of many of the health benefits coconuts has to offer. To get the heart benefits of coconut fiber the herbal supplement company ABS Herbs introduced Kolestrim which contains pure coconut fiber and garlic in capsule which may help reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke. It is available in leading drugstores nationwide and affordably priced at P7.65 per capsule. The recommended intake is one capsule before every meal. For more information about the product visit www.abs-herbs.com.ph.

Complete Oriental meal-in-a-box from Ministop

NOW, YOU CAN ENjoy your favorite Japanese and Chinese rice any time with Ministop's delightful Topper meals -- delicious Oriental rice toppings served in convenient boxes. Toppers, which uses special fragrant rice to highlight its flavor, is available in three variants: Chicken Teriyaki, Beef Brisket, Katsudon. Chicken Teriyaki is a filling Japanese meal with lean chicken meat in sweet teriyaki sauce on top of fried rice. Beef Brisket is a saucy Chinese meal with large chunks of tender beef in sweet and spicy sauce on top of hot fried rice. Finally, Katsudon is a popular Japanese specialty with breaded pork chops on top of Oriental-style fried rice. Ministop Topper meals are available at a very affordable price of P50 per serving. So feast on Toppers rice toppings-in-a-box at the nearest Ministop store for a delicious, complete and affordable Oriental meals now!

Bits & Clips

Reunion of UP Class '66

MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERsity of the Philippines Class of 1966 will hold a reunion on April 29, at the UP Cornell (UPCO) Swimming Pool in UP Los Baños. The reunion, which will start at 9 a.m., will be a prelude to the UP Alumni Homecoming on June 24, when Class '66 will be the ruby jubilarians. The class slogan, "Go for Gold in 10!," is in preparation for 2016, when the class will be the ruby jubilarians. Class members in UP Los Baños will host the reunion. The day's program will include a tour of the Rice Museum at the International Rice Research Institute, and demonstrations of virgin coconut oil production at the Institute of Biotechnology and of butter and cheese processing at the Dairy Training and Research Institute. Vic Valdepeñas, president of Union Bank and a member of the class, will host merienda in the afternoon. Members of the class who wish to join the reunion can sign up with Andrew O. Nocon (tel. 520-8371 or 0918-9301529) or Dr. Lydia Rodriguez Arcellana (tel. 929-8226, 931-8894 or 0920-9149374). Nocon heads Class '66 in this year's alumni homecoming. Arcellana is UP's assistant vice president for public affairs and director of alumni relations.

Ready for the world with Charmee feminine products

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Practical courses for lawyers

THE DIOKNO LAW CENTER, AN MCLE-ACCREDITED institution, is offering the following practical courses for lawyers at the RCBC Tower, 25th floor, Ayala cor. Sen. Gil Puyat Avenues, Makati City: April 21 (2-4 p.m.) - The Nuts and Bolts of Money Laundering, Amla and the Anti-Money Laundering Council; (4-5 p.m.) - A Practical Guide to Handling Habeas Corpus Cases; April 28 (2-4 p.m.) - How to Handle Legislative Inquiries and Blue Ribbon Committee Investigations; (4-5 p.m.) - How to Conduct a Legal Audit of an Agricultural Land Transaction. For more information contact Jom Nazareno/Daisy Buenaventura at 0926-3367041, dioknolawcenter@gmail.com.

POLICYHOLDER WINS TRAVEL PACKAGE FROM PHILAMLIFE

Philamlife policy owner Randy Senense (left) and colleague gamely pose with Disney icon Mickey Mouse during their recent Hong Kong holiday getaway. Senense won in the industry leader's Premium Panalo Raffle Promo. Philamlife organizes similar promos and contests yearly as incentive to clients who diligently and promptly pay their premium dues. Valued clients can look forward to more treats and rewards from Philamlife promos this year.

MFI SCHOLARS IN RELIEF SERVICE

Members of the Tribong MFI, a group of Meralco Foundation Institue (MFI) scholars involved in mission work, found themselves occupied with packing of donations from abroad that was coursed through the League of Corporate Foundations (LCF) for the victims of the Southern Leyte tragedy. Photo shows the scholars at work in the covered tennis court of the Department of Energy in Taguig. Executives (inset) who spearheaded the mission include (from left): Col. Alex T. Escaño, president, MFI; Saudi Arabia Ambassador Mohammed Wali; Malou Erni, executive director, Petron Foundation; lawyer Jose Jesus G. Laurel, VP, legal and external relations, Petron; and Kahlid D. Al-Saddagn, president, Petron.

MATIMCO AT 14TH CONSTRUCTION SHOW CEBU

Matimco Inc, a major player in the country's wood industry, has confirmed its participation in the forthcoming 14th Construction Show Cebu slated on June 2 to 5, at the Cebu Trade Hall, 3/Floor SM City Cebu. Shown are (from left) Lilibeth Ducut-Abais, managing director, L.A. Ducut and Company Inc; and Alvin Hing, AVP for marketing, Matimco Inc. For details on the event, contact L.A. Ducut at Manila (02)873-8876, 873-9047, 873-1198; Cebu (032)232-3729; 232-3740; cel. nos. (0917)838-2183, (0916)613-9179; or e-mail to info@laducut.com.

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PNOC
The Energy Company

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

2006-2007 CONTRACT ON RENTAL OF LATTICE / TELESCOPE CRANE, FORKLIFT AND SERVICE VEHICLE FOR METRO MANILA AND BATANGAS (ON-CALL PRIORITY BASIS)
EDC 06-041

The contract duration is One (1) year. Engagement is on-call basis.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o Noel A. Nicolasora) starting **April 20, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Five Hundred (Php 500.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **May 9, 2006, 10:00 a.m.** at 1st Floor Building 5, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, not later than **2:00 p.m.** on **May 23, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI--April 20, 2006)

ILOILO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Brgy. Cauayan, Pototan, Iloilo, Philippines
Tel. #529-8688 / 529-8063 / 529-8064
E-mail: ileco2@skyinet.net

INVITATION TO RE-BID

ILOILO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC., (ILECO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT BRGY. CAU-AYAN, POTOTAN, ILOILO IS INVITING ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR THE RE-BIDDING OF UNINSTALLED DENDRO THERMAL EQUIPMENT (AS IS WHERE IS) LOCATED WITHIN INCA RESERVATION AT SITIO TAGBAKAN, BRGY. JAYOBO, LAMBUNAO, ILOILO.

You are therefore invited for Re-Bid on April 28, 2006 (Friday), 1:30 p.m. at ILECO II Board Room, Brgy. Cau-ayan, Pototan, Iloilo. Bid Documents will be available only to qualified bidders from April 19-27, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable amount of One Thousand Pesos Only (Php1,000.00) to the Iloilo II Electric Cooperative, Inc. cashier.

ILECO II has the right to decide all matters regarding the re-bidding of said equipment.

For more information, please contact Mr. Fernando L. Lasafin/Engr. Jose Redmond Eric S. Roquios at (033) 529-89-81, 529-8063-64.

(Sgd.) RAMON P. APURA, SR.
General Manager

(PDI–April 20, 2006)

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More Classified Ads on page A18

Rizalian Batch '90 general assembly

RIZALIAN BATCH90 Association Inc. invites all Rizal High School Batch '90 graduate to a general assembly on April 22, Saturday, 5pm. at the RHS Alumni Hall, Caniogan, Pasig City. For details and inquiries please call Lilliemer Manalo at 0922-809-5405 or Eugene Espinosa at 0917-735-9605. Relive the fun, Reminisce the moments and share the vision.

U-belt fair

As thousands of new college graduates ponder the prospect of finding their first major job, St. Thomas Square announces the holding of its first U-Belt Career Fair. The U-belt Career Fair will be held on April 28-29 at St. Thomas Square located at Espana Blvd. corner Padre Campa Street, Sampaloc, Manila. For more information, visit www.stthomassquare.com/seisasia or call Joyce Paguio at 722-9303 or 722-5221.

Palscon celebrates 19th founding day with Cory Quirino

THE PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL Service Contractors (Palscon), a labor code-compliant professional organization of service providers is celebrating its 19th Founding Anniversary at The Legend Villas, Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City today. Ms. Cory Quirino TV Host and Inquirer Columnist, is the guest of honor and will talk about "Wellness." Palscon president is lawyer Giovanni H. Melgar, vice president is Rafael S. Chico, officers and board of directors are Evelyn R. Borja, secretary, Loida T. Bautista, treasurer, Rowena S. Maceren, auditor, Grace A. Zata, press relation officer, Nelia E. Castro, Emma H. Pabillo, Henry B. Nuqui, Rodolfo DC Enriquez and Ernesto A. Domingo, Jr. members of the board of directors. For more information, please get in touch with its Secretariat Office at Telephone Nos. 372-1411; 732-4782; 534-0035.

Tayo na sa Antipolo

THE STATUE OF OUR LADY TRACES ITS ORIGIN from an artisan-carver in 16th century Mexico, that was acquired by Governor General Juan Niño de Tabora. In 1626, the image arrived from Acapulco and was brought from the galleon in a procession to the Jesuit Church in Intramuros, Manila.

The image was brought to Antipolo by the Jesuits in 1591 after Fr. Pedro Chirino, S.J. had been chosen parish priest for Antipolo, Taytay, and the neighboring towns.

In 1639, the Chinese rebels who were retreating from Manila towards the Sierra Madre Mountains plundered the village of Antipolo. They set the church on fire, but the Blessed Image did not and would not burn. The incident propelled the Governor General, D. Sebastian Hurtado de Concuera to order the transfer of the Virgin to Manila, then, to Cavite where the image was venerated for fourteen years.

From 1648 to 1748, the image of Our Lady was taken to the voyages to Acapulco. After each trip, the Virgin was received at the harbor by the Captain-General and the Archbishop of Manila. Bells were sounded and triumphant "*aves*" were sung as forms of greeting her back. The Mass was sung in her honor at the Jesuit Church. The Captain-General and the Archbishop would then conduct her back to her own altar.

Despite being of Mexican provenance, the "Brown Virgin" of Antipolo is considered the most "Filipino" among the images of Mother Mary in the Philippines. The image had been carved from dark brown ebony hardwood.

The love for Our Lady of Antipolo created a modern form of devotion among Filipino travelers, OFW's and tourists who believe that a visit or an offering of prayer at the Shrine is as necessary for a trip abroad as a passport and visa.

Owner of new cars believe that a blessing from the Our Lady is a necessity, like the LTO registration and a driver's license to ensure their daily safe travels.

The present Shrine is distinct from the adobe pile of the 17th century. The idyllic rural barrio of yesteryears has now been transformed into a major city of Rizal. What has not been tainted, however, is the folk devotion, folk endearment for this Our Lady and our quaint folk manner of effectively combining revelry and religion, piety and picnics.

OBITUARIES

Architect Celia Caudal Dizon

"Cely"
November 23, 1922 - April 16, 2006

peacefully joined her creator
on Easter Sunday, April 16, 2006, at the age of 83.

Her bereaved family:
son Dr. Alejandro "Dondi" Dizon,
daughter-in-law **Fatima "Fay"**
grandchildren **Cristina** and **Anton**,

her brothers, sisters and their spouses:
Pepe † & Glory † Caudal, Lucy & Dionisio "Isio" † Tiongco, Miren & Eddie † Bonus, Tony & Terry Caudal, Amauri † Caudal, Freddie † & Patty Caudal, Bert & Tata Caudal, Andy & Lou Caudal, Digos & Glo Caudal,

all her nephews, nieces, grandchildren and friends who love her so much request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies at the Mount Carmel Chapel, Broadway St., New Manila, QC

Interment will be on Friday, April 21, 2006
at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 8:00 am mass.

Necrological Services offered by special friends from:
National Sandigan Foundation on Monday, April 17 (7pm), Zonta Mandaluyong on Tuesday, April 18 (7pm), United Architects of the Philippines on Thursday, April 20 (7pm)

In lieu of flowers & donations to the Home of Joy or Home of the Destitute & Dying of Mother Teresa are more appreciated.

Our Dearly Beloved

CARLITO "Boy" FAROL BAGUI

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on
April 16, 2006 at the age of 60.

His wife **Dixie**; his children **Coogie (BD) & Tine, Peewee & Lea, Mico & Shen, Budji, Christine, Chino**; his brothers & sisters: **Menchit, Chona** (†), **Cely, Cesar, Jun, Conrad** (†), **Teteng**; grandchildren: **Bien, Bastien, Aron, Alfred, Andrei, Mika, Sean, Carlo**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at La Funeraria Paz, Sucat.

Interment will be announced later.

Death Notice

ARMANDO D. MEDINA

Died in the Grace of our Lord on April 9, 2006 at the age of 46.
His body lies in state at the Family residence in #332, 3rd St., Holy Family Cmpd., Talon, Las Piñas City.
Interment will be today, April 20, 2006 at Las Piñas Catholic Cemetery, Naga Road, Pulang Lupa, Las Piñas City.
His family request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

JOSEFINA G. ILAGAN

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord
on April 19, 2006 at the age of 83.

Her children **Cesar**, **Olive** and **Alex**;
daughters-in-law **Aloih** and **Leny**;
grandchildren **Tina**, **Tracy**, **Terry**,
Ticky, **Stephanie**, **Topty** and **Toffy**;
grandchildren-in-law **Alfred** and **Daniel**;
great granddaughter **Nania**;
other relatives and friends request
the readers to join them in praying
for her eternal happiness
in the presence of our Lord.

Her remains lie in state at Our Lady
of Consolation Parish Church,
Miranilla Homes, Tandang Sora,
Quezon City.

Interment will be on April 22, 2006
at the Himlayang Pilipino
after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

"Over the sunset mountains, Someday I'll softly go
into the arms of Jesus. He who has loved me so."

FAUSTINO ADRIANO D. MADAMBA, SR.

of San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte and Bacolod City.
Peacefully went home to his Lord on April 11, 2006 at the age of 91.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Rizalina; children and sons-in-law **Ruth & Axel, Mercy & Anastacio, May, Adriano Jr.** and **Julie & Horace** together with his grandchildren, **André, Anna Belle** and **Sharon Rose, Hazel Joy** and **Hannah Jill.**

His remains lie in state at the Rolling Hills Memorial Chapels, Chapel of Hope, Mandalagan, Bacolod City.

Interment will be today, April 20, 2006 at the Rolling Hills Memorial Park after the 2:00 p.m. Mass. Necrological Service at the Bacolod Evangelical Church, Bacolod City.

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Extend its deepest sympathy and condolences
to the bereaved family of

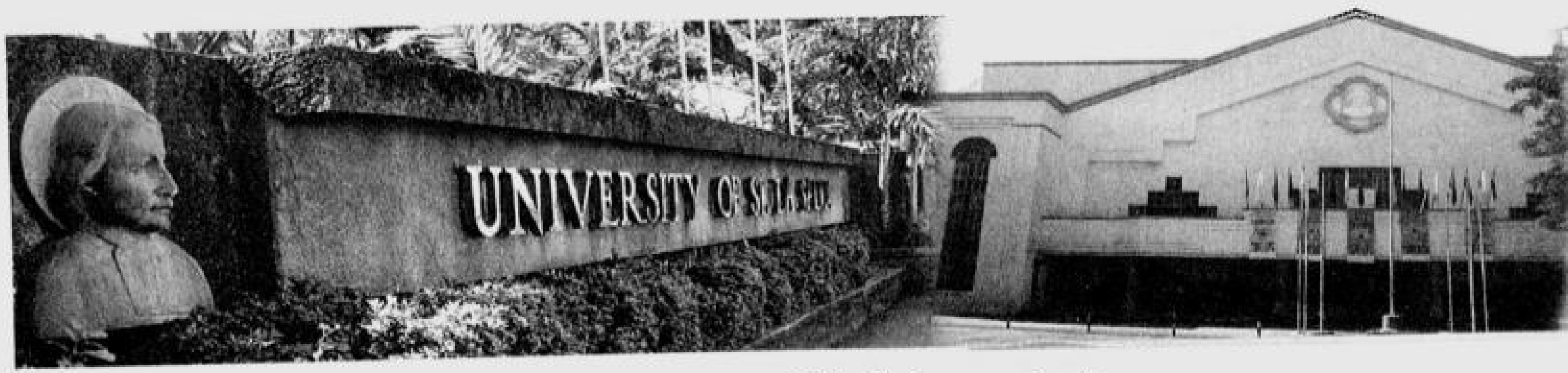
Natividad Panganiban Mayuga

Former Vice President, Treasurer and concurrent Director

who peacefully joined her Creator
on Easter Sunday, April 16, 2006 at the age of 92.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 22, 2006 at Loyola Memorial Park,
Sucat Road, Parañaque City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.



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BACOLOD CITY
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the Pioneer Class of 2006 of USLS College of Medicine, inspired by the ideals of St. John Baptist de La Salle, trained to become Christian professional doctors, and adhering to our Lasallian values and Filipino heritage, commit ourselves to promote the culture of life and to serve our countrymen especially the poor. Therefore with confidence we pledge to offer 40 hours of individual community service as physicians, with the hope of providing free medical care to those who are in need of it the most, especially the least fortunate.

We make this pledge this 9th day of April 2006
before our mentors, families and our fellow Lasallians
here in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines.
So help us God.

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Regulators agree to share info to protect investors

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S FOUR FINANCIAL REGULATORS—Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Securities and Exchange Commission, Insurance Commission and Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.—yesterday agreed to share information to help protect the investing public.

The heads of these four agencies comprising the Financial Sector Forum (FSF)—BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr., SEC chair Fe Barin, IC chief Evangeline Escobillo and PDIC officer in charge Imelda Singzon—signed a memorandum of agreement to establish a multilateral information-sharing network.

The multilateral MOA lays out a framework for the sharing of relevant reports and information essential in the effective performance of the regulators over financial institutions.

"The sharing framework considers disclosure prohibitions as parties agree to strictly observe confidentiality rules on shared data," the FSF said in a statement.

The MOA supplements existing bilateral data-sharing arrangements among member-agencies.

An integral part of the MOA is the inventory of reports which, among others, describes each pertinent report, its source agency and the frequency each report is submitted to and generated by the source agency.

The MOA also calls for the generation of a universal master-list of all accredited agents among FSF agencies which covers external auditors, credit rating agencies and appraisal companies.

The covenant also paves the way for a consultation process among FSF agencies when formulating regulations on reports required for submission from its regulated financial institutions.

In the long term, the FSF is keen on policies on six "high-priority" areas affecting the financial sector: risk management, capital adequacy, issuance of securities by non-banks, prudential limits, collective investment schemes and analogous insurance products.

The FSF is a voluntary cooperative endeavor of the concerned agencies to provide an institutionalized framework for coordinating the supervision and regulation of the financial system, while preserving each agency's mandate.

Airbus sees strong sales for small jets

By Daxim L. Lucas

AIRLINES IN ASIA-PACIFIC WILL CONTINUE to buy more short-haul twinjet aircraft, complimented by periodic acquisitions of longer-range wide body planes, in the near future, according to a spokesman for the world's largest plane maker.

As a result of this trend, European aircraft manufacturer Airbus foresees continuing strong demand for its A320 short- to mid-range aircraft from airlines in the region, including its main clients in the country, Philippine Airlines and Cebu Pacific Air.

In a press briefing, Airbus regional communications representative Anthony Philips said this prognosis was supported by trends seen last year where 460 A320 aircraft were delivered to airlines in the region last year.

"Of this number, 267 [A320 aircraft] went to low-cost carriers in the Asia-Pacific," he said.

Major buyers of the smallest jet in the Airbus family last year were airlines from China, India and Malaysia.

All told, 16 low-cost carriers in the region have selected the A320, mainly because of its low operating cost, he said.

The aircraft maker is counting on the continued boom in the low-cost carrier industry, especially since it is still in its infancy in Asia compared to Europe and North America.

Philips pointed out that only 6 percent of the passenger traffic in the Asia-Pacific region go through low-cost carriers compared to 30 percent in North America and 20 percent in Europe.

Improvement of RP business climate sought

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND private sector firms yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at evaluating how the country's investment climate may be improved.

The MOU provides for a grant of $87,000 or about P4.5 million to the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines' efforts to study ways in promoting an environment more conducive to business.

Robert Ludan, an economic counselor at the US embassy, said the grant would fund such studies and the issuance of period reports about investment climate issues in the Philippines.

Ludan said the Investment Climate Improvement Project would cover governance issues such as corruption and the tax environment as well as the legal framework affecting businesses and regulatory transparency.

Amcham director John Forbes said the ICIP would basically follow through with and improve on the chamber's Philippine roadmap to attracting more foreign investment.

Forbes added that American's concerns in other areas cover peace and order issues; electoral reforms; restoration of incentives to investors in the Clark special economic zone and the creation of a Department of Information and Communication Technology.

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LIFESTYLE

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PHOTO COURTESY OF "FLAVORS OF THE PHILIPPINES"

LUMPIANG ubod presented two ways—as spring roll and in a pouch

An aspiring Filipino chef must appreciate his country's own cooking and do it properly

Take two for Filipino food promotion

IT MAY SEEM ODD THAT A FILIPINO FOOD festival will be held in Cebu, at the Mactan Shangri-La, next week. Such festivals are usually associated with promoting our cooking abroad.

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

What we have on the local level features a particular regional food, giving a taste of the flavors and preferences of Filipinos in a specific part of the country.

But organizers of the Cebu festival see it as a way to give their guests an overview of Filipino cuisine beyond the expected Cebuano fare.

Three cooking experts were asked to participate. They are Glenda Barretto of Via Mare, Myrna Segismundo of Restaurant 9501 and Claude Tayag who cooks out of his home in Angeles, Pampanga.

Although they will feature the cooking of their respective home provinces, they will also include cooking from other regions, dishes they have learned to cook since they travel throughout the country both for pleasure and for work.

Majority

Work involves judging in culinary competitions or doing cooking demonstrations. It is then expected that the majority of the regions will be represented in the festival.

Barretto, who is from Samar, will include the *kinilaw* and the *humba* of her Visayan province. She knows that other places have their own versions of the dishes. In Batangas, for instance, *humba* is what is known in other places as *paksiw na pata*.

She is mulling over the idea of doing the *pyanggang manuk* of Jolo having learned the necessary spice mix of *pamapa itum* from a Joloano.

Segismundo is from Batangas and she will do pork *estofado* the way it's done in her hometown of Lipa. The pieces are stewed with a basic mixture of *adobo* but sugar is added. The sauce is thickened with *pan de sal* and flavor added with *saba* bananas.

Tayag will do a *sinigang sa bayabas* of pork ribs, *bangus* and *sugpo*. He plans to include fish *cardillo*, using any white fish like *pampano*, then cooking it with a sauce made of fish roe (*bihod*). He will probably also do *sisig*, the Pampango dish that is probably known throughout the country.

Dishes that were once strictly regional or provincial do travel and eventually become known in other places. *Sisig* is one. The Ilocano *pinakbet* is another. Migration is one cause. Zamboangueños I interviewed for a

TAKE TWO/ C2

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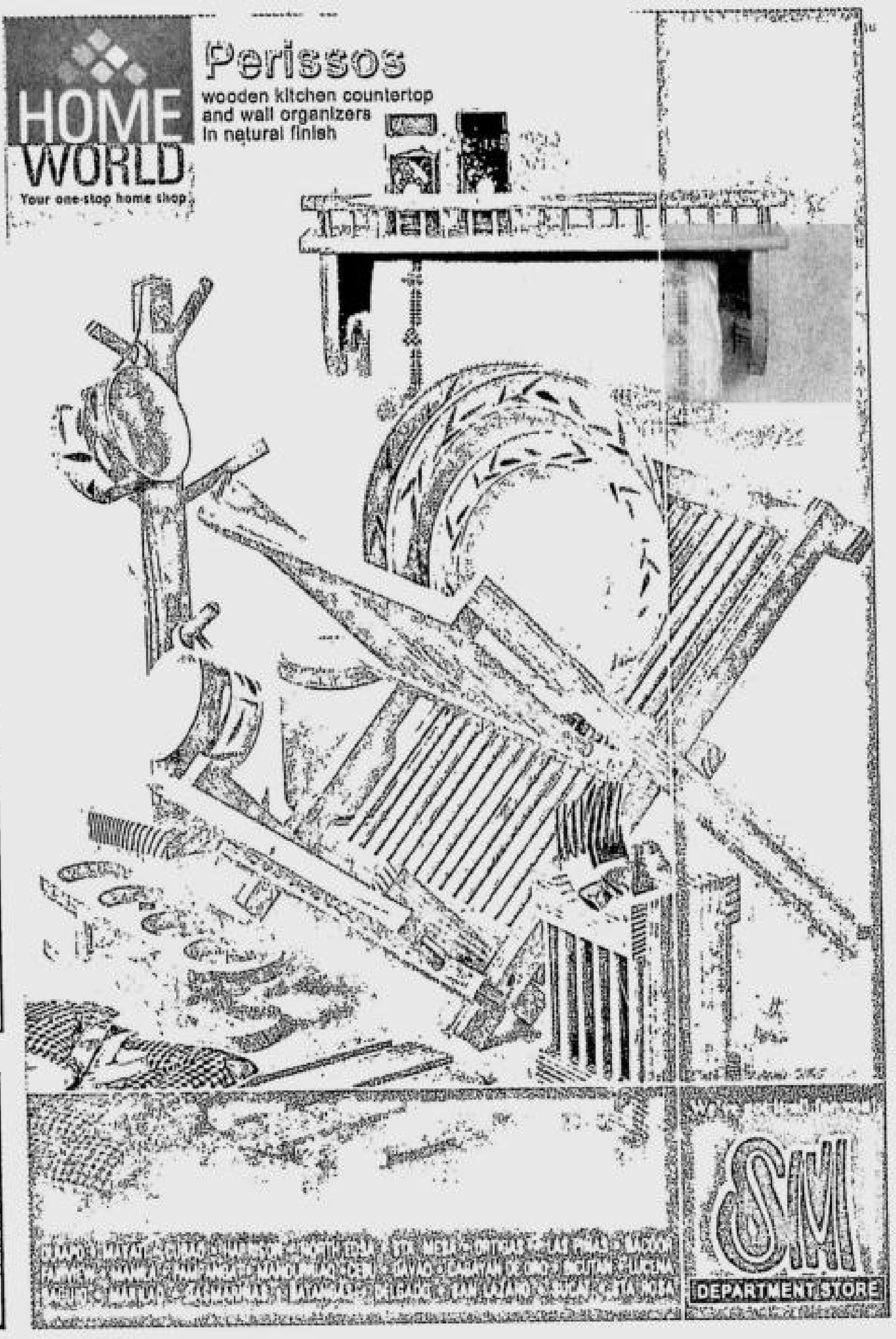

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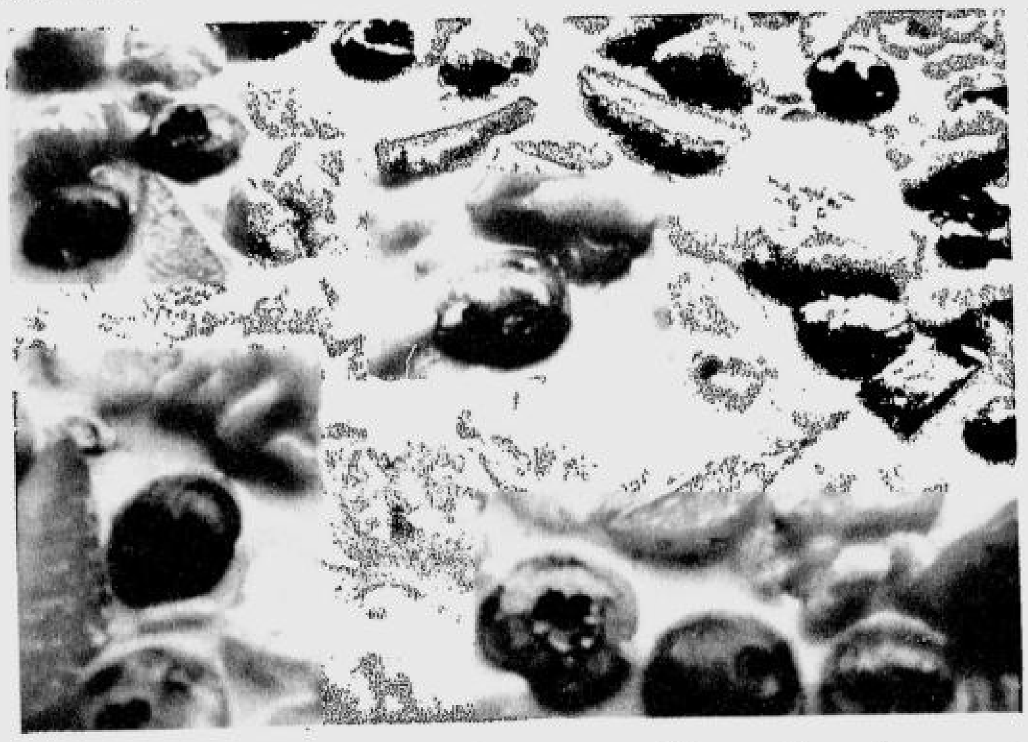
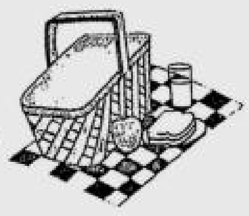


BICHER Muesli

CHEF Jessie Sincioco
Le Soufflé

LEMON Meringue Tart



Picnic recipes, final chapter

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Bicher Muesli (Jessie Sincioco's version)

300 g muesli mix
600 g plain or flavored yogurt
200 g honey
15 g cinnamon powder
300 g raisins
4 pcs grated green apples, skin on
juice of 1 lemon
Mix together.
300 g fresh strawberries cut into quarters
200 g fresh blueberries
250 g grapes, cut into half with skin
2 pcs bananas, cut into small cubes
4 pcs fresh orange, segments only
1 pc ripe mango, cut into small cubes
1 pc fresh plum, sliced horizontally
100 g toasted walnuts

Mix everything properly and serve cold. Best served the following day. Add any fresh fruits of your choice.

Bread and Butter Pudding with vanilla sauce

Butter pudding:
85 g dark raisins soaked in 80 ml rum
255 g bread
85 g butter, melted
960 ml milk
170 g sugar
340 g eggs, beaten
64 g egg yolks, beaten
3 g vanilla extract
1 g ground cinnamon
3 g salt

Combine milk, 85 g of sugar in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Blend eggs, egg yolks, vanilla, remaining sugar and salt. Gradually add 1/3 of the hot milk, stirring constantly. Add remaining hot milk and strain custard into a bowl.

Add bread, cinnamon and raisins to custard. Ladle mixture into buttered ramekins. Bake in 160°C (320°F) preheated oven in water bath until just set, 30-40 minutes, depending on the size of the molds.

Garnish with fresh fruit and serve warm with vanilla sauce and mint leaves.

Vanilla sauce:
4 g vanilla extract
1 liter milk
250 g egg yolks
180 g sugar

Combine egg yolks and sugar, stirring with wire whisk to incorporate. Bring milk just below boiling point, then gradually add into egg mixture, stirring.

Return the mixture into a saucepan and cook in 80-82°C, stirring.

Strain and add vanilla extract.

Lemon Meringue Tart

Pate Brisee:
500 g butter
500 g shortening
15 g salt
4 pcs eggs
450 g ice water, approximately
1,400 g all-purpose flour, sifted

Sieve flour, add butter and shortening. Rub in by hand to incorporate, mix eggs, salt and ice water. Gradually add flour, rub by hand just to incorporate. Transfer to the floured clean tray, refrigerate 30-45 minutes before using.

Grease pie mold. Preheat the oven to 160°C (320°F).

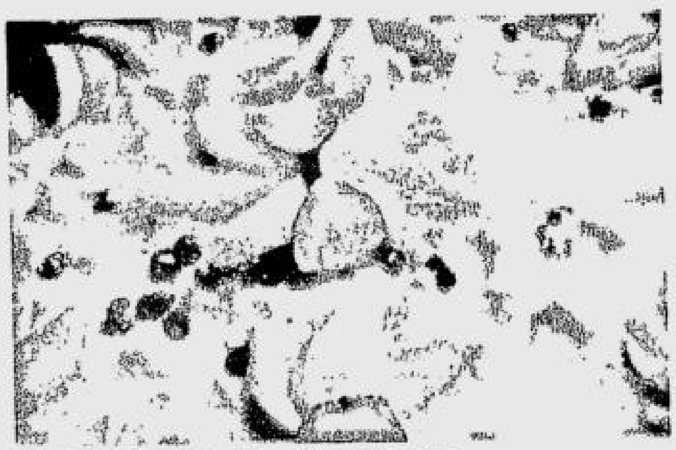
Roll pie dough to 3 mm thick, lay on the pie molds. Lay parchment paper on top and blind bake for 15 minutes.

Filling:
9 pcs lemon, juiced
16 pcs eggs
700 g sugar, refined
600 g fresh cream

Zest lemon, cut in half, squeeze juice, strain and mix with the zest. Set aside.

Put eggs and sugar in mixing bowl, whisk in hot water bath until sugar melts. Pour in cream and stir to incorporate, strain.

Mix lemon juice until well-incorporated and pour mixture into pie shell. Bake in oven for 45 minutes or until mixture sets like custard. Cool.



BREAD and Butter Pudding with vanilla sauce

Meringue:
250 g egg whites
1 g cream of tartar
250 g sugar
1 pc lemon zest

Whisk egg whites, cream of tartar, gradually add sugar, whip to stiff peaks, add lemon zest. If you wish, slice a thin sponge (use vanilla sponge recipe for trifle), lay on top of tart. Ice tart with meringue, slightly dust with confectioner sugar. Flash in oven until golden brown.

Fruit Trifle

FRUIT Trifle

Vanilla sponge:
15 eggs
7 yolks
500 g sugar
450 g cake flour
50 g cornstarch
120 g butter, melted
10 g vanilla extract

Whisk eggs, egg yolks and sugar together until ribbon stage. Gently fold in dry ingredients with a fine whisk until well-incorporated. Temper melted butter with the small amount of sponge mixture and gently fold into sponge mixture with vanilla extract. Pour on pan, bake in oven 160°C (320°F), 25-30 minutes. Cool.

Custard filling:
500 g milk
3 pcs egg yolks
50 g sugar, refined
30 g cornstarch
2 g vanilla extract

Combine milk with half of the sugar, bring to a boil. Combine remaining sugar with cornstarch, add eggs and mix to a smooth paste. Temper egg and sugar mixtures into hot milk and bring to a full boil.

Stir constantly until it thickens slightly. Remove from heat, stir in vanilla.

Brandy snap:
50 g butter, soft
50 g sugar, refined
50 g glucose or karo syrup
40 g cake flour
5 g brandy
1 g ginger powder

Mix all ingredients into a smooth paste. Spread on tray and bake until golden brown.

Take out of oven, before it sets, cut into triangles and lay on rolling pin to set.

200 g strawberry jam
4 pack strawberry jelly
1 can fruit cocktail
2 slices vanilla sponge or roulade

Slice vanilla sponge and sandwich jam, slice into cubes, 1 cm in width. Put in glass, put fruit cocktail on top.

Heat water, pour in jelly powder and mix until well-dissolved. Set on ice water until cold and begins to set. Pour into glass until the sponge absorbs the jelly, about 1/3 of the glass.

Refrigerate to set.

Cook custard filling and cool slightly before pouring into the glass. Refrigerate until cold, decorate with whipped cream, fresh strawberries, mint leaves and brandy snap disc.

My new class schedules are out. Call 9289296/6335162.

Back to regular KR next week!

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

PASTRY chef Ernie Babaran
International School for Culinary Arts and Hotel Management

Take two for Filipino . . .

From page C1

food book told me they did not eat vegetables until Ilocano soldiers came and taught them how to plant and eat those.

But as a dish travels through the country, it excludes traditional ingredients, includes nontraditional ones or substitutes what is available. *Pinakbet* in other places has squash. Mayonnaise, sometimes fried egg, has been added to *sisig*.

Dishes get different interpretations, such as the *lumpiang ubod*. It has "grown" from the finger-sized original in Silay, Negros Occidental, and the sauce, instead of being contained within the *lumpia*, is now served separately.

What is important, says Segismundo, is that what they offer in Cebu is traditional or closest to the original cooking. She wants to steer clear of fusion. But they still have to discuss that point among themselves.

Promotion

It's uncanny how the Filipino food festival in Cebu comes right after the launching yesterday of Project Kulinarya—a program that aims to promote Filipino cuisine in the country and abroad. It's a joint effort by the Asia Society, the Department of Tourism, the Hotel and Restaurant Association and the project sponsor, San Miguel Pure Foods.

The very first step was to make a list of dishes that would be included in a program to standardize recipes. To standardize means agreeing as well on which kind of *adobo*, for instance, to promote. Should it be the one with soy sauce and vinegar or the one without soy sauce but colored with *achuete* seeds? And what about the *sinigang*? Should it be soured by tamarind, *kalamansi, batuan, kamias* or tomato?

The Kulinarya group tasked to do this includes the three Cebu festival participants—Barretto, Segismundo and Tayag. With them are Conrad Calalang, Margarita Fores, Ariel Manuel and Jessie Sincioco. Calalang used to run Barasoain, Seasons and Intermezzo; Fores is proprietor of Cibo, Pepato and Café Bola; Sincioco is a partner at Le Soufflé; Manuel is chef patron of Lolo Dad's.

MYRNA Segismundo

While most of them run restaurants that don't serve Filipino food, they do support the aims of Kulinarya.

It took a while to come up with a list, more than a year, partly because members of the group were busy with their businesses and their own food promotions abroad. Finally, 60 dishes were included. Each Kulinarya member chose which ones he/she would do according to his/her recipe. There will be a tasting by selected food experts who will comment on the outcome.

The recipes chosen will be compiled into a book or a manual designed for use by both professional and amateur cooks. Pictures will suggest the presentation.

It is hoped that the Kulinarya manual will be used by restaurants in the country and by those who want to open Filipino restaurants abroad.

It is also hoped that it becomes an indispensable tool in the many culinary schools here. That way, Filipino cooking will become as important a subject as French, Italian and other Asian cooking being taught today.

For, after all, an aspiring chef must appreciate one's own cooking first, must know how to do it properly, must master its dishes to be truly called a Filipino chef.

The price of convenience

By Linda B. Bolido

THE CONSUMER

YOU MAY NOT REALIZE IT BUT using bank automated teller machines (ATM) as a virtual electronic purse, taking only what you need for the day or a couple of days, is costing you a tidy sum.

The practice may be convenient and it may make you feel safer as you do not have to carry a lot of cash but you pay a rather hefty price.

While bank networks have given you access to more ATMs, service fees are often levied on transactions you do with machines other than your own bank's, including simple balance inquiries.

Rep. Joseph Santiago of the lone district of Catanduanes has released the results of a survey by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to let bank consumers know where they "can get more value for their money by using cheaper ATMs and avoiding the costlier ones."

Of course, another thing they can do is to be more prudent in their use of ATMs.

18 M cardholders

Santiago, author of House Bill 4630, which seeks to prohibit banks from arbitrarily exacting service fees or penalty charges, said over 18 million Filipinos were ATM cardholders serviced by three networks—BancNet, Megalink and ExpressNet. Collectively, the networks that pool together 58 universal, commercial and thrift banks have over 5,800 ATMs.

"Based on the list, the seven banks under ExpressNet have the lowest service charges—ranging from P5 to P9.50 per withdrawal—on cardholders of other banks," Santiago said. The universal Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. does not collect any service charges at all on withdrawals made by cardholders of other ExpressNet members.

All ExpressNet banks allow cardholders of fellow members to make account balance inquiries freely without paying any services fees.

Megalink's 23 members charge P10-P11 per withdrawal, except the Philippine Veterans Bank, which collects only P5. Union Bank of the Philippines Inc. has the stiffest service fee, P12 per withdrawal, for cardholders of fellow member banks.

Among Megalink banks, only Philam Savings Bank and Robinson Savings Bank Corp. do not collect any service fees on withdrawals made by cardholders of other banks. The two banks, as well as Planters Development Bank, also do not charge P1-P2 for balance inquiries by cardholders of other Megalink members.

The 28 BancNet members charge P8-P10 per withdrawal. The small Centennial Savings Bank Inc. collects only P5. Two members—Citibank N.A. and Citibank Savings Inc.—do not collect any service fees on withdrawals by cardholders of other banks. All BancNet banks do not collect service charges on balance inquiries made by cardholders of other members.

Of over 123 million BancNet transactions and 645,000 Megalink daily transactions in 2005, withdrawals accounted for almost half or 49 percent.

Savings accounts average a 3.8 percent interest per annum. In simplest terms, your P1,000 will hopefully get you P38 at the end of the year. Two fortnightly withdrawals (on the 15th and 30th, paydays) will already cost you about P20 a month.

Lens cleaner

The New York Times, in an article by Gardiner Harris on April 14, said Bausch and Lomb had removed temporarily its ReNu with MoistureLoc contact lens solution from store shelves following reports of illness and under pressure from major store chains.

Health regulators, according to the story, were investigating if the product could have caused 109 cases of fungal infections in contact lens users.

The company was quoted as saying its action did not affect its other products or ReNu with MoistureLoc made outside the United States.

The Times said infections among users in Singapore and Hong Kong led the company to suspend shipments of the product there in February.

(Our regular columnist, Marietta V. Giron, is indisposed. Please send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; PO Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph —Editor)

There's a mouse on my table

By Linda B. Bolido

NEW TECHNOLOGY HAS COME TO the restaurant business. But don't expect robot waiters just yet. You don't even have to settle for virtual dining as you actually touch, see, smell and taste your order.

But now, with an interactive menu, you can just click the mouse to let the kitchen know your pleasure. At least that's how they do things at Sakae Sushi, arguably the first in the country to introduce such innovation, in The Fort.

The latest project of Hubert Young's group, responsible for the UCC chain and Crepes & Cream, the Japanese restaurant also boasts of a new take on the traditional Filipino *turo-turo*. Instead of having everything laid out for you in rows of pots and pans and you pointing at what you want, sushi, drinks, dessert and other items "parade" before your eyes on a conveyor belt. All you have to do is grab what takes your fancy when it passes your table.

If you like your Japanese food authentic, you don't have to worry that what you'll get is a Westernized or Filipinized version of your favorites. Though, if you think about it, the new technology probably makes it even more authentic given the Japanese's passion for innovation.

Interactive

Sakae Sushi, a franchisee of a Singaporean chain, has installed a computer monitor and mouse on every table. Diners can either choose from the conveyor belt (the restaurant is so designed that the diners have access to the belt without having to stand up and move from their places) or check out the interactive menu then click on the items they want. At the open kitchen, the chefs get the orders through their own monitor.

Don't fret if you are quick on the trigger and mistakenly click on something other than what you want. A server will verify with you first if the kitchen got your orders right before they bring the food to your table.

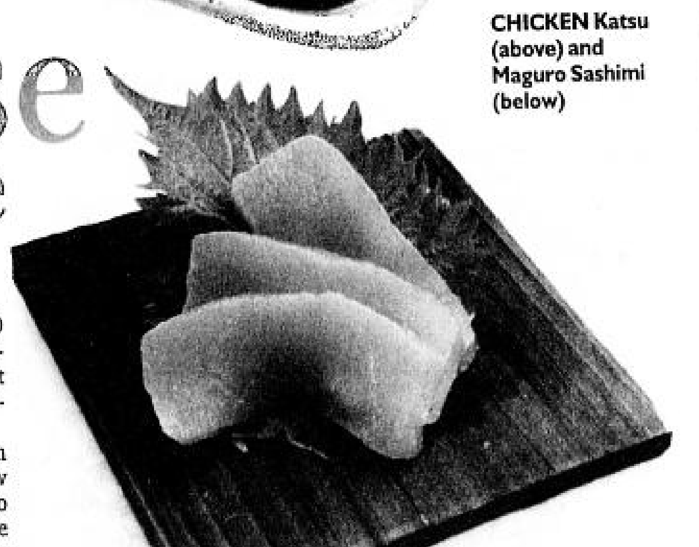
At Sakae Sushi, you also get "bottomless" hot water as each table has a tap for this purpose.

Open 10 a.m.-12 midnight, the restaurant offers the all-you-can-eat sushi promo, 2:30-6 p.m., Monday-Saturday. Like other promos of its kind, the condition is no leftover. Adults pay P499 and senior citizens P399. Children below 12 are charged P299 each. Incidentally, the restaurant has special menus specifically packaged for children. Orders even come in attractive containers specially designed for kids.

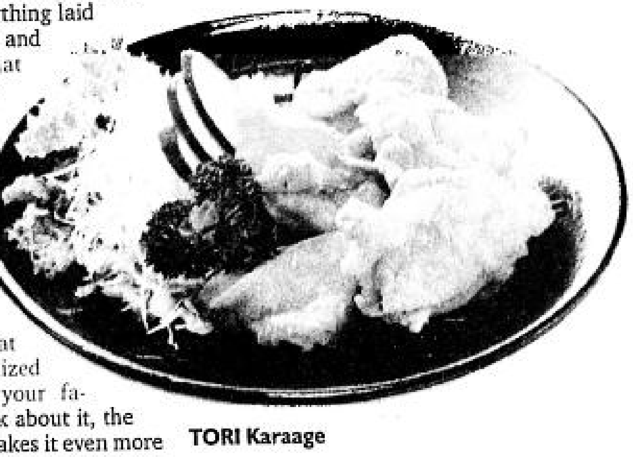
For meetings and conferences, Sakae Sushi is probably, at the moment, unbeatable for one very important feature—every function room (there are five of them) has its own restroom. People holding private meetings or social functions need not go out into the main dining area to use the rest room. Even rooms that can be joined together to make the space bigger each has its own rest room.

Sakae Sushi is at 26th Crescent West Park, Global City, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig (tel. 8434891 and 8435452). Another branch will open at the new SM Mall of Asia, CM Central Business Park, Bay City, Pasay.

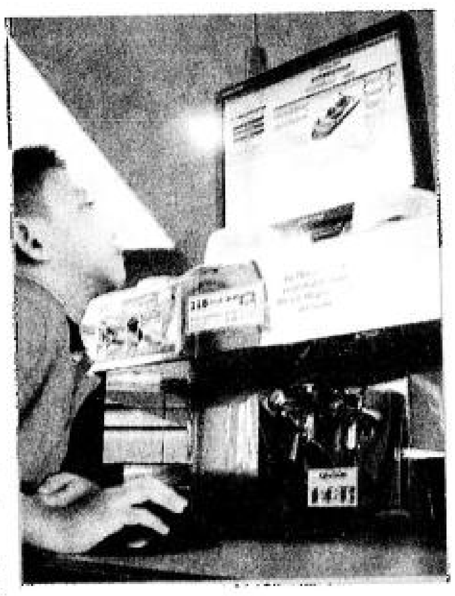
CHICKEN Katsu (above) and Maguro Sashimi (below)



Sakae Sushi has a new take on the traditional Filipino 'turo-turo'—a conveyor belt for sushi, desserts and drinks



TORI Karaage



A YOUNG customer checks out kiddie meals in the interactive menu.

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APR 22 SAT 2:30 - 6:00PM - BUSINESS BAKESHOP BESTSELLERS! BIG, UNIFORM-SIZED FROZEN UP TO 6 MONTHS SILVANAS (MINI SANS RIVAL); BRAZO DE MERCEDES; CLASSIC CHOCOLATE MOUSE CAKE; MACAPUNO PANDAN CAKE W/ MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER ICING. **P1,800. *BY MORELLA***

APR 23 SUN 2:30 - 6:00PM - REYNOSO-GALA & ARAULLO KAKANIN! MELTS-IN-THE-MOUTH SPECIAL RICE BIBINGKA; SAPIN-SAPIN ESPECIAL; DELICIOUS, EASY TO MAKE RICE SUMAN; HOMEMADE HOPIA W/ MONGO OR UBE FILLING. BONUS RECIPE: APONG METYANG'S CASSAVA CAKE.
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APR 24 MON 2:30 - 6:00PM - UBE-CHIFFON CAKE; ROCKY ROAD. MOIST CHOCOLATE CAKE; FOOD FOR THE GODS & WALNUT BROWNIES. PLUS TIPS ON CONVERTING CAKES INTO JELLY ROLLS & MUFFINS. DELICIOUS CAKES SOLD IN TOP BAKESHOPS! ALL CAKES W/ DIFFERENT ICINGS.
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APR 25 TUE 230 - 6:00PM - MONEY MAKING HOTEL & BAKESHOP BESTSELLERS! CHOCO LAVA-CAKES (CHOCO CENTERS WILL OOZE OUT!). "TARTUFO" (ITALIAN DOME CHOCOLATE COVERED ICE CREAM CAKE W/ CHOCO CAKE BASE CAN BE FROZEN FOR A MONTH OR LONGER); CREAMPUFFS W/ BAVARIAN & CHOCO FILLING W/ 2 GLAZES; THE YUMMIEST OF NEW YORK RESTAURANT SCHOOL CHEF INSTRUCTRESS LORRIE REYNOSO'S BAKED CHEESECAKE.
P1,800. *BY MORELLA*

APR 26 & 28 (WED & FRI) 9:00AM - 5:00PM WILTON METHOD OF CAKE DECORATING COURSE 1 (FOR BEGINNERS). NOW, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GO TO THE USA TO GET A USA WILTON CERTIFICATE FROM A CERTIFIED WILTON METHOD INSTRUCTOR W/ OVER 30 YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN CAKE DECORATING CLASSES. P4,500. INCLUDES INGREDIENTS, LUNCH SNACKS, WILTON KIT, VALUE = P1,775; AND A WILTON USA CERTIFICATE. *BY LENI R. ARAULLO*

APR 29 SAT 2:30 - 6:00PM - BESTSELLER OVEN BAKED CHICKEN PIES IN MUFFIN CUPS; FLAKY EMPANADA, MELTS-IN-THE-MOUTH MAMON; MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER SLICES; PUTO PAO. BONUS RECIPES OF MACAROONS; PUTO FLOUR UBE & TRI-COLORED PUTO
P1,800. *BY MORELLA*

APR 30 SUN 2:30 - 6:00PM - MONEY MAKING BAKESHOP CAKES FOR BEGINNERS. COFFEE CRUNCH CHIFFON CAKE W/ WHIPPED CREAM ICING. LENI'S #1 SELLING PRUNE WALNUT CAKE W/ MAGNOLIA GOLD BUTTER ICING. ZENAIDA NICHOLAS' VERY LIGHT BLUEBERRY "TRUMP'S FAVORITE" CHEESECAKE. HOMEMADE RUM CAKE W/ FRESH ORANGE JUICE.
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MAY 2 TUE 2:30 - 6:00PM - ANG SARAP PANG-NEGOSYO! 2 VERSIONS OF THE CHEWIEST CHOCO CRINKLES IN MANILA; GIANT MANGO MERINGUE WALNUT TORTE. CLASSIC AMERICAN PIE. FRENCH STREUSEL APPLE PIE
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MAY 5 FRI 2:30 - 6:00PM - MAX'S STYLE FRIED CHICKEN. JOLLIBEE STYLE CHICKEN W/ GRAVY; CHICKEN BURGER; DELICIOUS POTATO SALAD. SIZZLING GRILLED PORKCHOPS; FOUR SEASONS PUNCH; RIPE MANGO; MELON TAPIOCA W/ SAGO. GREEN MANGO JUICE. **P1,800. *BY SYLVIA***

MAY 6 SAT 2:30 - 6:00PM - LEARN 6 SUGAR-FREE YUMMY RECIPES MADE W/ EQUAL SPOONFUL & 4 COFFEESHOP BESTSELLERS MADE W/ REGULAR SUGAR! DELICIOUS SUGAR-FREE CHICKEN BARBECUE W/ SALAD GREENS W/ VINAIGRETTE DRESSING; SUGAR-FREE POLVORON; SUGAR-FREE MANGO CHEESECAKE; SUGAR-FREE ORANGE CHEESECAKE; CHOCO CHEESECAKE; ALMOST SUGAR-FREE OATMEAL WALNUT COOKIES; REGULAR COFFEE CHOCO BARS; STARBUCKS STYLE RAISIN WALNUT OATMEAL COOKIES & CHOCO CHIP WALNUT OATMEAL COOKIES. P2,500. *BY SYLVIA*

MAY 7, 14, 21, 28 (4 SUNDAYS) 9:00AM - 5:00PM - 2006 FONDANT & GUMPASTE FLOWERS COURSE 1 - *COLETTE PETERS STYLE.* 4 LESSONS. P6,000 - INCLUDES INGREDIENTS, LUNCH, SNACKS, EXCEPT DECORATING MATERIALS (AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT THE CULINARY STUDIO, OR BRING YOUR OWN). PLS. BRING STYRO, BOX SCISSORS, PAINT BRUSHES & CUTTERS IN EVERY LESSON
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MAY 8 MON 2:30 - 6:15PM - LIGHT & AIRY ENSAYMADAS; CHEESE ROLLS. SPECIAL EGG PANDESAL; PANDESAL W/ FILLING; CINNAMON ROLLS. BREAD BAKING MADE EASY!
P1,800. *BY SYLVIA*

MAY 9 & 11 (TUE & THU) 9:00AM - 5:00PM. WILTON METHOD OF CAKE DECORATING COURSE 2 (FOR BEGINNERS). LEARN THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF WILTON FLOWERS & BORDERS, AND RECEIVE A WILTON USA CERTIFICATE FROM A CERTIFIED WILTON METHOD INSTRUCTOR. P4,500, INCLUDES INGREDIENTS, LUNCH, SNACKS & WILTON COURSE 2 KIT, VALUE = P1,775. *BY LENI*

MAY 10 WED 2:30 - 5:30PM - CHINESE COOKING. SAVORY STYLE FRIED CHICKEN; ROAST MONTEREY PORK LIEMPO; MRS. OLIVIA TEE'S FOOKIEN STYLE AMOY FRESH LUMPIA; PORK SIOMAI W/ QUAIL EGGS; HONGKONG SHRIMP SIOMAI; HACAO (SHRIMP DUMPLING W/ HOMEMADE CLEAR WRAPPER)
P1,800. *BY SYLVIA*

MAY 12 FRI 2:30 - 5:45PM - CASA ARMAS STYLE SOFT-TO-THE-BONE SPANISH ROASTED CHICKEN W/ BABY POTATOES; THE YUMMIEST BACON-WRAPPED MEATLOAF W/ GRAVY; STEAMED THEN DEBONED, WHOLE LAPU-LAPU SALAD; OUR BEST HAM MACARONI PARTY SALAD; GOOD OLE' AMERICAN APPLE PIE.
P1,800. *BY SYLVIA*

MAY 13 SAT 2:00 - 6:30PM - MONEY MAKING SAUSAGES COURSE 3. LEARN 7 OF YOUR FAVORITES! FOOT-LONG HOTDOGS; BEEF SAUSAGE JERKY USING "VIPPI" CASING USED FOR HOTDOG MAKING; WHOLE CORNED BEEF SERVED IN 5-STAR HOTELS & RESTAURANTS; PORK HAMONADO & BEEF DE RECADO; THE BEST PAMPANGO PORK TOCINO; LONGANIZA LUCBAN **P2,500. *BY LENI.***
IDEAL FOR HOME BUSINESS

MAY 15 TUE 2:30 - 6:30PM - BAGUIO'S FAMOUS RAISIN BREAD. AMERICAN TASTY, HONEY BREAD, BRAIDED CHEESE BREAD, MORELLA & ERNEST'S BIG PANDESAL; SUPERSOFT CARMELIT BREAD IN A BUNDT PAN. DELICIOUS BREAD MADE EASY!
P1,800. BY SYLVIA

MAY 16 TUE 2:30 - 6:00PM - POPULAR JAPANESE DISHES 1. LEARN TO COOK JAPANESE STYLE TENDERLOIN STEAKS W/ BELL PEPPERS, MONGO SPROUTS, WHITE ONIONS; JAPANESE MIXED RICE (KAMAMESHI); YAKITORI (CHICKEN BARBECUE IN SKEWERS); MISO SOUP; BREADED PORKCHOPS (TONKATSU); SUKIYAKI; CUCUMBER IN JAPANESE VINEGAR DRESSING; SWEET DRIED DILIS(APPETIZER) **P1,800. *BY SYLVIA***

MAY 17 WED 2:30 - 5:00PM - PRACTICAL, EASY, DELICIOUS NOT SPICY THAI COOKING 1 - CHICKEN GALANGA COCONUT SOUP; RED CURRY CHICKEN; GREEN CURRY CHICKEN; BEEF CURRY; CHICKEN ON A BED OF SPINACH W/ PEANUT SAUCE; BAKED RICE IN PINEAPPLE SHELL; THAI ICED TEA & THAI ICED COFFEE.
P1,800. *BY SYLVIA*

MAY 18, 25 (2 THURSDAYS) 2:00 - 5:00PM LEARN TO MAKE BOTTLED PRESERVES IN 2 LESSONS. P1,800. MANGO JAM; PINEAPPLE MANGO; APPLE SAUCE FOR ROAST TURKEY & PORKLOIN; UBE JAM; FRESH ORANGE / MARMALADE. GUAVA JAM. STRAWBERRY; FRESH LEMON CURD MARMALADE ***BY LENI***

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.sylviareynosogala.com

ATTENTION BAGUIO RESIDENTS SATURDAY & SUNDAY CLASSES

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PLEASE SEE BAGUIO MIDLAND COURIER SUNDAYS FOR BAGUIO SCHEDULE

MAY 7 SUNDAY 1:30 - 4:30PM ALL BAGUIO RESIDENTS ARE INVITED TO A FREE COOKING & BAKING DEMO BY MORELLA AT SM MALL BAGUIO ATRIUM.

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